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THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING

MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK

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THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING

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THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING

FROM THE
SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORDS
OF

MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1901

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Published, November, 1901

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

NEW YORK
PUBLIC

MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK, D.D.

1858—1901

First Presbyterian Church, Lockport, N. Y., 1882.

Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Md., 1887.

Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City, 1900.

(Found, after Dr. Babcock's death, on the fly-leaf of his pocket Bible.)

RIVERDALE, N. Y., November 7, 1899.

Committed myself again with Christian brothers to unreserved docility and devotion before my Master.

Many of those who looked to Dr. Babcock for help and inspiration have asked that some of his words might be put into permanent form; this book is the simple outgrowth of that request.

The sources from which selection could be made are few. Dr. Babcock's sermons were preached from full, but intricate, notes, which no one else could develop, and he had written no book.

Many of the selections have been already printed in the *Sunday-School Times*, *The Brown Memorial Monthly*, *The Christian Endeavor World*, and *Forward;* and grateful acknowledgment is due to these publications. Appreciation and thanks are also due to those who have contributed—from notes made at public services—many of the most helpful phrases, and to those who have shared personal letters.

The verses, which were written in moments of recreation, are added; and the resulting book is printed in loving memory of one who lived what he taught.

Katherine Tallman Babcock,
Mary R. Sanford.

CONTENTS

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING:

	PAGE
Silent Testimony	1
Indomitable Power of the Will	1
Wishing and Willing	1
Opportunity of Trouble	2
Conscientiousness	2
To-Day and To-Morrow	3
Opportunities	3
Self-Betrayal	4
Unimportance of Philosophy	4
On the Watch	4
Amusement Only for the Workers	5
Dependableness	5
Assured Victory	5
Criticism	6
Good Intentions	6
Confessing Our Sins	7
No Place for Anxiety	7
Living Stones	7
Largeness	8
Joy in the Thorn	8
The Friendship of Christ	9
Christ is All	9
Making Things Sunshiny	10
Roots and Fruits	10
No Harm in Loving the World	10

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING—*Continued:* PAGE

Saved for this Life 11
When Life is of Small Account . . 11
Living Water 12
Possession 12
Possibilities 13
Thrift that Brings Beggary . . . 13
Second Sight 14
Excuses 14
Always Doing Better 15
Working with God 15
More Right than We Know . . . 15
Life's Story 16
Living in a Castle of Love . . . 16
Glory of the Commonplace . . . 17
Something Better than Explanation . 17
Feeble Faith is Better than None . . 18
Christ in All 18
Obedience 19
Just Filling Our Own Place . . . 19
"The Uses of Adversity" . . . 20
Being One's Self 20
The Rod and the Child . . . 21
Honesty in Prayer 22
The Mission of Distance . . . 22
Saying "Good-By" 23
Pain as a Friend 23
Heroism Every Day 24
Wants and Needs 24
"Things that are Behind" . . . 25
Suffer Little Children 25

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING—*Continued:* PAGE

Uncommon Service 26
Forgiveness 27
Making the Best of Things . . . 27
Looking Down 28
Suggestion Rather than Definition . 28
Prejudgment 29
Success or Failure 29
False Values. 30
Letting Things Make the Best of Us . 30
Using Our Tools While We May . . 31
Folly of Being Powerless . . . 32
What is Honesty? 32
God's Machinery 33
When Sympathy is Needed . . . 33
Good Listening 34
Is Death an Interruption? . . . 34
Showing Spirituality 35
What is Good Hearing? . . . 36
Why Does Your Tree Stand? . . 36
A Practical Way to Lay Down Your Life 37
Better than Worshipping the Bible . 37
Doing and Knowing 38
Goodness and Usefulness . . . 39
Merit of Concealing Troubles . . 39
Friend Necessity 40
Up or Down Stream 40
Securities Well Invested . . . 41
Hope 42
Life's Arena 42
Watching the Proportions . . . 43

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING—*Continued:* PAGE

Honesty in Consecration . . . 43
Now the Only Time 44
Seeing the Good 45
Boundlessness of God's Purposes . . 45
Getting Ahead of Whom? 46
Faithfulness First 47
Living Belief 47
Genuine Christianity 48
God's Knowledge of What We Shall Be 49
Sin 49
Christlike 50
More than "I Am Sorry" . . . 50
Folly of Trifling with Trifles . . . 51
Holding in the Bad Bacilli . . . 52
Making Duty a Delight . . . 52
Disposition 53
Contentment 54
To-Day 54
Obligation to Receive 55
Foggy Morning 56
Deathlessness 57
Principles Rather than Rules . . . 57
Working Out Salvation 58
A Good World 59
The Ascension 59
A Habit Worth Forming . . . 60
A Specialist 61
Looking Backward 62
A Pattern for Us All 62
Uselessness of Altruism Without Christ . 63

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING—*Continued:* PAGE

The Witness of Life 64
Speaking a Ship 65
"Either Pull, or Bail, or Cut Bait" . 65
God's Love is Eternity 66
Captivity 67
Acknowledging Mistakes . . . 68
Transmutation 68
A Message 69
Disgrace of a Joyless Life . . . 70
Business vs. Religion 71
Circumstances 72
Kinship in Kindness 73
The Ethics of Perfection . . . 73
The Inevitable 74
Normal and Abnormal 75
Living Down Consequences . . . 76
Alienating Power of Sin . . . 77
Providence 77
Joy in All Things 78
Over-Sensitiveness 79
The Test of Possessions 80
That Which Cannot be Taken Away . 81
God's Answer 82
Fitness 83
The Abundant Life 84
"Rejoice Evermore" 85
Stewardship 86
Discouragement 87
Worth Believing 88
Friendship and Right 89

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING—*Continued:* PAGE

Doing and Discovering 90
Why Complain? 91
The Beatitude of Endurance . . . 92
Common Days 93
Success 94
Blessedness of Eternal Service . . 95
Battlement-Building 96
A Lesson from Peter the Rock . . 98
Steadfastness 99
The Try-Square 101
Loyalty, Not Feeling 102
Encouragement 104
A Verse for the New Year . . . 106
Our Business in the World . . . 108
The Father of Lights 112
The Carpenter's Son 116
Written on Shipboard, February, 1901 . 121

PRAYERS:

At Communion Service 137
On Christmas Day 137
On Easter Day 138
On Thanksgiving Day 139
After the Offering 140
On Various Occasions 140

PASSAGES FROM LETTERS:

On the Death of a Child . . . 151
On the Death of a Husband . . 151
On the Death of a Husband . . 152

PASSAGES FROM LETTERS—*Continued:* PAGE

To One in Great Anxiety . . . 152
Written at Bethel, April, 1901, on Hearing of the Death of a Friend's Mother 153
On Hearing of the Wounding of a Friend at the Battle of El Caney . 154
To One in Great Distress . . . 154
To a Young Woman in Special Temptation and Need 155
To the Same 156
To the Same 157
To a Friend on the Christian's Hope . 157
To a Friend on the Communion of Saints 158
To One Who Was Greatly Discouraged . 158
To a Harvard Freshman . . . 158
Written to a Friend Over Seventy Years of Age, Who Was in His Last Illness 159
To the Same Friend a Month Later . 159
To the Same Friend Two Months Later, in May 160
On the Death of a Child . . . 161
On the Death of a Father . . . 162

POEMS:

O That I May Grow 167
In the Furrow 167
Be Strong 168
The All in All 168

POEMS—*Continued :*

PAGE

Love and Loyalty 169
In Many Parts 170
Not to Be Ministered To . . . 170
Rest 171
I Am Thine 172
Sonnet 172
Companionship 173
Worship 174
Sailing Westward 175
The Moon 176
The Love of God 177
The First Day of Spring . . . 178
My Father's World 180
Surprise 182
Thine 183
A Song 184
Clear Skies 184
Memories 185
A Winter Day 186
Autumn Hopes 186
The Trees in Winter 187
To the Dogwood 188
School Days 189
Emancipation 191

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING

THOUGHTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIVING

Silent Testimony.

Men are convinced more quickly and certainly by what they see than by what they hear. It is not, "Let your lips speak," but, "Let your light shine." The living epistle is not known and *heard* of all men, but known and *read.*

Indomitable Power of the Will.

No man can ever estimate the power of the will. It is a part of the divine nature, all of a piece with the power of creation. We speak of God's fiat. "*Fiat lux et lux erat*" (Let light be and light was). Man has his fiat. The achievements of history have been the choices, the determinations, the creations of the human will.

Wishing and Willing.

Some men seem to think that when they have praised virtue they have done their duty by it. "How beautiful is goodness!" we say. "O that I were good!" If this is only wistful, we are

wrong. If it expresses our decision to attain that goodness, we are right. To praise a virtue without determining to possess it is a first step toward moral suicide. To wish and not to will is spiritual collapse, a house on the sand.

Opportunity of Trouble.

The tests of life are to make, not break us. Trouble may demolish a man's business but build up his character. The blow at the outward man may be the greatest blessing to the inner man. If God, then, puts or permits anything hard in our lives, be sure that the real peril, the real trouble, is what we shall lose if we flinch or rebel.

Conscientiousness.

Although there is nothing so bad for conscience as trifling, there is nothing so good for conscience as trifles. Its certain discipline and development are related to the smallest things. Conscience, like gravitation, takes hold of atoms. Nothing is morally indifferent. Conscience must reign in manners as well as morals, in amusements as well as work. He only who is "faithful in that which is least" is dependable in all the world.

To-Day and To-Morrow.

Part of to-day belongs to to-morrow, as the seed belongs to the shoot, as the foundation belongs to the building. So to-day owes its best to to-morrow, for not to do right to-day may ruin to-morrow. But the reverse is not true. To-morrow cannot ruin to-day. Time's wheel does not run backward. Banish, then, foreboding and anxious forecast, and fill to-day with faithful work, with kindness and courage and hope; and so you will keep to-morrow from being a marplot, and make it a good, honest to-day when it comes.

Opportunities.

Opportunities do not come with their values stamped upon them. Everyone must be challenged. A day dawns, quite like other days; in it a single hour comes, quite like other hours; but in that day and in that hour the chance of a lifetime faces us. To face every opportunity of life thoughtfully and ask its meaning bravely and earnestly, is the only way to meet the supreme opportunities when they come, whether open-faced or disguised.

Self-Betrayal.

"Every man imputes himself,"—so Tennyson once said. It is a startling thought. Judging is self-betrayal. By the judgment with which we judge, we are ourselves judged. By our words we are justified or condemned. We should be more slow to judge, if we realized that the judgment we utter transfers us instantly from the judge's bench to the prisoner's bar.

Unimportance of Philosophy.

Men had bodies before they ever thought of writing treatises on physiology. Life comes before letters, and experience before explanation. Philosophy is the description of experience. The Bible is not the cause of religion, but the record of it. The thing of supreme importance is to possess the facts of religion, a personal relation to God, rather than a correct philosophy about the facts. That will take care of itself.

On the Watch.

"Watch and pray." Being on the watch often changes the character of our prayers. We blunder along, and fall, and have to pray for forgiveness. Had we been watchful, it would have been

a prayer for help, and then praise for victory. Is not the prayer to be forearmed better than the prayer to be forgiven?

Amusement Only for the Workers.

The boy who does not go to school does not know what Saturday is. If a man would know what amusement means, let him earn it, and know its re-creation. No man has a right to amusement, or knows the real joy of it, who has not earned the right by work.

Dependableness.

"Surely the Captain may depend on me" may not be the best thing to say before others, but, rightly meant, it is a noble self-commitment. Dependable people!—their price is above rubies. The world would be a dreary place if there were not some Christians who need no prodding or watching; who can be told, and then trusted.

Assured Victory.

Most victories are secured in advance. He who has absolutely decided goes easily through the unsettling voices of earth, and because of a private covenant with his God is safeguarded against sinful attractions or distractions. Jesus

said, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do," though the death of the Cross was waiting. The victory of Calvary was won in Gethsemane.

Criticism.

How good it would be if we could learn to be rigorous in judgment of ourselves, and gentle in our judgment of our neighbors! In remedying defects, kindness works best with others, sternness with ourselves. It is easy to make allowances for our faults, but dangerous; hard to make allowances for others' faults, but wise. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off," is a word for *our* sins; for the sins of *others*, "Father, forgive them."

Good Intentions.

Many a good intention dies from inattention. If, through carelessness or indolence, or selfishness, a good intention is not put into effect, we have lost an opportunity, demoralized ourselves, and stolen from the pile of possible good. To be born and not fed, is to perish. To launch a ship and neglect it is to lose it. To have a talent and bury it, is to be a "wicked and slothful servant." For in the end we shall be judged, not alone by what we have done, but by what we could have done.

Confessing Our Sins.

Unless we realize our sins enough to call them by name, it is hardly worth while to say anything about them at all. When we pray for forgiveness, let us say, "my temper," or "untruthfulness," or "pride," "my selfishness, my cowardice, indolence, jealousy, revenge, impurity." To recognize our sins, we must look them in the face and call them by their right names, however hard. Honesty in confession calls for definiteness in confession.

No Place for Anxiety.

Anxiety has no place in the life of one of God's children. Christ's serenity was one of the most unmistakable signs of his filial trust. He was tired and hungry and thirsty and in pain; but we cannot imagine him anxious or fretful. His mind was kept in perfect peace because it was stayed on God. The life lived by the faith of the Son of God will find his word kept: "My peace give I unto you."

Living Stones.

If a man is to be a pillar in the temple of his God by and by, he must be some kind of a prop in God's house to-day. We are here to support,

not to be supported. No one can be a living stone on the foundations of the Spiritual House, which is God's habitation, without being a foundation to the stones above him.

Largeness.

Littleness needs largeness. A cut on the finger needs not a finger full of new blood for the day, but all the refreshing and recreating of the red life current. Are we thoughtless of others? We need not a little more thoughtfulness, but the spirit of him who pleased not himself. Are we hypersensitive to praise or blame? We need to dedicate ourselves once and again to the greater glory of God. Let us get the stars in their courses to fight against Sisera.

Joy in the Thorn.

Paul's thorn was not pleasant to him. He prayed to be rid of it. But when he found it had come to stay, he made friends with it swiftly. It was no longer how to dismiss, but how to entertain. He stopped groaning, and began glorying. It was clear to him that it was God's will, and that meant new opportunity, new victory, new likeness to Christ. What God means is always too good to be lost, and is worth all it costs to learn. Let us learn as swiftly as we may. Time is short.

The Friendship of Christ.

If a friend is the one who summons us to our best, then is not Jesus Christ our best friend, and should we not think of the Communion as one of his chief appeals to us to be our best? The Lord's Supper looks not back to our past with a critical eye, but to our future, with a hopeful one. The Master appeals from what we have been to what we may be. He bids us come, not because he sees we are better than we have been, but because he wants us to be. To stay away because our hearts are cold is to refuse to go to the fire till we are warm.

Christ is All.

Is not the trouble with most of our witnessing for God that it is inconstant and inconsistent, lacking unity as well as continuity? What is our hope but the indwelling Spirit of Christ, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, to inspire every word and deed by his love? Then will "broken lights" blend in steady shining, the fractional be summed up in the integral, and life, unified and beautified by the central Christ, radiate God's glory, and shine with divine effulgence.

Making Things Sunshiny.

Have you ever had your day suddenly turn sunshiny because of a cheerful word? Have you ever wondered if this could be the same world, because someone had been unexpectedly kind to you? You can make to-day the same for somebody. It is only a question of a little imagination, a little time and trouble. Think *now*, "What can I do to-day to make someone happy?"—old persons, children, servants—even a bone for the dog, or sugar for the bird! Why not?

Roots and Fruits.

We are not created in Christ Jesus out of good works, but unto good works. We do not make ourselves Christians any more than we make ourselves human beings. Works are the fruit of life, not the root. The works of the flesh are uncleanness, hatred and their bad train; the fruit of the spirit is love, joy and their good train. Life works from root to fruit; logic argues from fruit to root. We grow from our roots; we are known by our fruits.

No Harm in Loving the World.

We cannot know or enjoy or love the world too much, if God's will controls us. Has a mother

anything but joy in watching the little daughter's devotion to her doll? Not until the child is so absorbed that she cannot hear her mother's voice. Did anyone ever love the world more than Jesus did? Yet was anyone ever so loyal to the Father's will? Worldliness is not love of the world, but slavishness to it.

Saved for this Life.

Salvation is not putting a man into Heaven, but putting Heaven into a man. It is not putting a sinful man into a law-abiding community, but writing the law of God in his heart and mind. The real question is not, What will we do under outward compulsion? but, What will we do by inward choice? Salvation is not the change of circumstances, but that central change in us, that change of the heart, of its attitude, its intentions, of its choices, which will make it the conqueror under all circumstances in life's battles.

When Life is of Small Account.

To do right is the only real obligation that faces us. A thief, defending himself by saying, "But a man must live," was met with the answer, "I do not see that." There is no necessity to live, but there is a supreme necessity to do right.

Thousands of men and women have laid down their lives rather than do wrong. Let us never allow what are called the lower necessities of life to say a word in the presence of the imperial "ought."

Living Water.

If you have ever been driven to drink stale water from a cistern, you have a good idea of what Jesus meant when he spoke of "living water." When the Christian life is real, in living oneness with "Christ who is the fountain," there is a joy and sparkle about it, which they never know who are drinking the water of old experiences and ancient memories. How does the Christian life taste to you? Is it "new every morning"?

Possession.

The only test of possession is use. The talent that is buried is not owned. The napkin and the hole in the ground are far more truly the man's property, because they are accomplishing something for him, slothful and shameful though it be.

And what is a lost soul? Is it not one that God cannot use, or one that cannot use God? Trustless, prayerless, fruitless, loveless—is it not so far lost? So may a man have a soul that is lost and be dead while he lives.

Possibilities.

Astronomy has opened the eyes of the devout to the possibilities of the life of eternity. When it tells us of the worlds upon worlds that the heavens contain, we catch our breath at the suggestion of the greatness of the future life. For perhaps amid these other worlds of his, God has for us larger work to do than ever we have imagined. Faithfulness, we know, leads to large opportunities; if we do well here, we shall do inconceivably better in the limitless life of eternity. It is to be remembered, though, that God's future plans for us depend largely on our present loyalty.

Thrift that Brings Beggary.

Life's real loss is life unlived. The strength we pay out for a principle enriches us, though the cause may seem a failure. The strength we save through cowardice or selfishness impoverishes us. The love that is given, though it be not half returned, builds up the heart, while the love that is withheld shrivels it. Prudence may be an enemy of power, and thrift bring beggary behind it. "There is that withholdeth and tendeth to poverty."

Second Sight.

The most remarkable instance of second sight in the Bible is given by Moses's choice where he "had re-spect unto the re-compense of the reward." Three times we are told he took a look past the material and the visible over the shoulder of things to the real values, imperishable, eternal, to the face of God. Doubtless there were many to call him short-sighted; and so it would seem at first sight, but second sight showed better powers of vision. The invisible came into ken, and a reward incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, was his.

Excuses.

An excuse for sin is a statement of the circumstances under which a man did wrong. When we say, "I could not help it; circumstances were too much for me," do our hearts believe it to be true? We say, "My temperament, my inherited appetite, business exigencies, irresistible pressure," as though we were compelled to do wrong. The first man in the long line of apologetic succession said, "The woman tempted me," but did not say, "and made me eat." Whatever he might wish implied, he could only say, "And I did eat." No unconsenting soul can be made to sin, and so sin is inexcusable.

Always Doing Better.

Whenever we make a grateful review, let it mean instant commitment to a better future. If the mercies of God have blessedly beset us, let us not build "Three Tabernacles," that we may abide; but rather, like Paul, call the places where our mercies meet us "Three Taverns," then push on, thank God, and take courage. Every attainment is to be a footing for new attempts, and every goal a point of departure. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

Working with God.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And I work! Say that too. If you destroy the sequence, life loses heart, and joy, and meaning, and value. Swing into line with the eternal energy, be a force among forces, a toiler, a producer, a factor, and life never loses its tone and flavor, its bead or glamour. There is no real taste to bread nor bliss in sleep for the idler. He is the doubter, the skeptic, the unhappy man. His idleness proclaims him diseased and decaying.

More Right than We Know.

"When a man is wrong, he is more wrong than he knows." Think of this the next time you are on a through train that does not go

through, because it was late somewhere. Instead of making up time, it continues to lose it. Local trains have now its right of way, and block signals hold it remorselessly. All things seem to conspire against it. Let the virtue of being on time shine in a new light, and be glad that, "when you are right, you are more right than you know."

Life's Story.

How good it is that, though new chapters go on with our life's story, and people drop out whom we have loved, and incidents change so that it seems quite like another tale, yet the real plot is spiritual and eternal. The true friendships and affections will all come in again, in the next volume. There is no "finis" at the end of Volume One, nor yet of Volume Two. Always to be continued, never to be concluded, are the life and love that are rooted in Jesus Christ.

Living in a Castle of Love.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" does not mean keep yourselves loving God, but keep believing and rejoicing that God loves you. "Conviction" is a good word there, because it comes from *con* and *victum*—*con*quered, or *vinculum*—a chain. Be conquered, be enchained, by the

thought that God loves you. "Keep" means guard, protect, as in a fortress. Live in this castle, and no enemy of doubt or fear can by any means hurt you. "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

Glory of the Commonplace.

Why do we trifle with goodness and virtue till we wake to their value through the bitterness of their loss? There may be nothing strikingly dramatic about the rewards or consequences of daily, steadfast obedience to God, but they shine in "something of an angel light," where men look back to them from the shame and misery of the tragedy of disobedience. The value of doing right is constant, whether men appreciate it at the time or not. Locking a barn seems no longer commonplace when the horse is stolen, and the value of taking care of furnaces comes out tremendously in the light of a burning house.

Something Better than Explanation.

No explanation is of any value in matters which do not grow out of experience. Until a deaf man hears music, it is wasted breath to describe it, and there is no proof of color to the blind. When Jesus spoke to the disciples the words recorded in the fourteenth chapter of John,

he offered them truth for experience without explanation. He promised them manifestation of himself. He knew that the one who should enter into this experience would never be perplexed by divine reticence in explanation, or by the imperfection of human philosophy.

Feeble Faith is Better than None.

If God made no response except to perfect faith, who could hope for help? But God has regard for beginnings, and his eye perceives greatness in the germ. The hand of the woman in the crowd trembled as it was stretched toward Jesus, and the faith back of it was superstitiously reverent, trusting in the virtue of the robe, rather than in the One who wore it; yet the genuineness of that faith, feeble though it was, triumphed in God's loving sight. Real trust is real power, though the heart and hand both tremble.

Christ in All.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed—*all* in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Do" does not belong there. There is more than doing in life. Thinking, speaking, hoping, planning, dreaming —all are to be in the name of the Lord Jesus. His love and life are to color and shape our am-

bitions and accomplishments. In Him, as a plant in soil, in rain and sunshine, we are to live, growing up by him and into him. In his name we are to work, to pray, to suffer, to rejoice, and at last to go home. It is only another way of saying, "For me to live is Christ."

Obedience.

Men say, that when they know they will do; Jesus says, that when they do they will know. He does not promise to manifest himself to the man who dreams or debates, but to him who keeps his commandments. The seeds of truth sprout in the soil of obedience. The words of Jesus in the mind of a disobedient man are no more vital than wheat in the wrappings of a mummy. To know the divinity of Jesus's teachings, we must do his will with definite intention. Moral disobedience is mental darkness, but to submit our wills in loyalty to his law is to open our minds to the light of his truth.

Just Filling Our Own Place.

We often think that if we had that man's means or that man's ability or that man's opportunity, we could do something worth doing; but, as we are, there is no possibility of any great thing.

Yet God does not want us to fill any other man's place, or to do any other man's work. God wants us to improve our own opportunity with the possessions and the powers that He has given us. It is a very great thing for us to do the very best we can do just where and as we are. God asks no one of us to do more than this, nor has any one of us a right to do less.

"The Uses of Adversity."

Present suffering is not enjoyable, but life would be worth little without it. The difference between iron and steel is fire, but steel is worth all it costs. Iron ore may think itself senselessly tortured in the furnace, but when the watch-spring looks back, it knows better. David enjoyed pain and trouble no more than we do, but the time came when he admitted that they had been good for him. Though the aspect of suffering is hard, the prospect is hopeful, and the retrospect will start a song, if we are "the called according to his purpose," in suffering.

Being One's Self.

To be our best selves should be our ambition—not to be somebody else. A carver needs tools of different sizes and temper and shapes of cutting

edge. The perfection of his work depends on their not being all alike. So God may use us to help conform humanity to the image of his son. We owe it to that work to respect our individuality, and to keep ourselves at the highest point of efficiency. To be used in the perfecting of one line in that work is reward enough for any tool's being itself, and being worn out in the work.

The Rod and the Child.

Reproof or punishment should never be given for the relief of the feelings of authority, but, always and evidently, for the good of the disobedient. To punish a child in anger cuts both ways, and, unlike the twice blest droppings of mercy, is doubly bad, cursing him that gives, and him that takes. Punishment should be meted according to the nature of the offence, and not according to the degrees of annoyance. Justice is not mercurial and explosive, or self-absorbed. Its business is not to relieve its own tension. It should be serene and certain and quiet-eyed. Think twice, and pray three times before punishing a child.

Honesty in Prayer.

Prayer must mean something to us, if it is to mean anything to God. If the accustomed time of prayer comes around, and we have nothing that interests us enough to pray about definitely and honestly, we would better frankly say so to God than kill time in hollow, heartless formality. To keep up the habit of prayer by saying thoughtless words is not worth while. It is a bad habit of prayer, or it is a habit of bad prayer. It is better not to pray than to pray and not be honest. This prayer, however, at least might be always possible: "O God! show me my need of Thee."

The Mission of Distance.

Life's features are so close to us that they often seem out of proportion. But the day and distance will come, when we shall see how well balanced were all God's thoughts of us. The eye too close to a picture has no right to telegraph criticism about the painter's purpose or skill. Stand where the painter intended. Some views of life are never understood except in a review, some prospects or aspects never appreciated except in retrospect. Reserve your judgment. Time will vindicate God, and if it does not set you singing, eternity will.

Saying "Good-By."

Why should we hesitate to say "good-by" to each other? Are we not Pagans, to think that a word has power over God's quiet purposes, and that saying "good-by" smells of death? Must men die intestate because they think that making their wills is cutting out their shrouds? If we were old Romans, who thought "vale!" meant "forever," we might be shy of such a word, but "good-by," even if it should be for the last time on earth, is only the difference between "good-night" and "good-morning." Say it, then, like a Christian, and, if it still comes hesitatingly, stretch it out into the loveliest of wishes, "God be with you."

Pain as a Friend.

Pain is a friend rather than a foe. It stands between extremes of life and death, calling us ever toward life. It ceases when its warning has stirred the soul to thought and remedy, and brought back health, or it ceases when the battle is lost. Like a fire-bell, it stops when the fire is put out or burned out. Let us not resent it. It has a kind heart, though its hands hurt. An engineer does not like to see a red flag, and yet he is only too glad to see it. That we may know

the truth, and so be made free from ignorance and peril, is part of the mission of pain.

Heroism Every Day.

We should all be heroic if our trials were on a grand scale! Should we? Heroism in the least is the only pledge of heroism in the greatest. Unless we take the smallest trials as real trials of us, and trifling tests as real tests of us, we give promise of going down under great ones. Dignify little troubles by the thought of the divine purpose in them, and great troubles will have dignified treatment. Let each small annoyance or disappointment be one degree of heat in the furnace, for the steel's sake, one gritty grain in the grindstone, for the knife's sake, and the making of heroism is here.

Wants and Needs.

Wants and needs are different things. We often want what we do not need, and need what we do not want. We distinguish between young wants and needs, and "know how to give good gifts to our children." Is not the infinite mind wise enough, and the infinite love strong enough, to subordinate our wants to our needs and disappoint us in the short run, if need be, to develop

and delight us in the long one? Real needs override incidental wants; we cannot always have what we please, if we are to have what God pleases—and what is best for us. To want what God wishes, is a swift way to have his wishes come true, and to have our real needs amply supplied.

"Things that are Behind."

Progress is marked by stations left behind. If we follow Jesus, we go somewhere, which means leaving some place. Journeying with the breast to the East, means with the back to the West. The disciples left their boats and nets when they followed Jesus. What has our following cost us? What selfish plans, worldly projects, doubtful amusements, dangerous companionships, are behind us for the King's and the kingdom's sake? We sing, "Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee," but another hymn brings the thought to a sharp point, "Have I left aught for Thee."

Suffer Little Children.

Dare we let children grow up with no vital contact with the Saviour, never intentionally and consciously put into his arms? Not to bring them to him, not to teach them to walk toward

him, as soon as they can walk toward anyone, is wronging a child beyond words. The terrible indictment uttered by the Lord, "Them that were entering in ye hindered," and the millstone warning for offending little ones, are close akin to the deserts of those who ruin a man's whole day of life by wronging his morning hours. Not to help a child to know the saving power of Christ is to hold back a man from salvation.

Uncommon Service.

It is true, and it is a great comfort that it is true, that the giving of a glass of water can please God, and the sweeping of a room can glorify Him. But woe be to us if we are content with small service. Too much thought of little things belittles. We should "attempt great things for God." Caleb said, "Give me this mountain"; Mary broke the alabaster box that was exceeding precious; the disciples left all to follow Jesus, and counted it joy to suffer for his sake. Let us not be easily content. The note of heroism should be in our battles with sin, in our speaking, in our giving, in our serving. Our King deserves and expects kingliness.

Forgiveness.

How sure we are of our own forgiveness from God. How certain we are that we are made in his image, when we forgive heartily and out of hand one who has wronged us. Sentimentally we may feel, and lightly we may say, "To err is human, to forgive divine"; but we never taste the nobility and divinity of forgiving till we forgive and know the victory of forgiveness over our sense of being wronged, over mortified pride and wounded sensibilities. Here we are in living touch with Him who treats us as though nothing had happened—who turns his back upon the past, and bids us journey with Him into goodness and gladness, into newness of life.

Making the Best of Things.

There is a making the best of things that is noble. It is high philosophy, it is holy resignation and contentment, it is bravely greeting the inevitable. Paul knew its secret, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." But there is a making the best of things that is false and shameful. It is labelling that as best which we deeply know is not the best. It is cowardly contentment. It is "letting things go," in weak complaisance, or shallow optimism, when

they could be bettered, if we cared to better them. We have no right to make the best of anything that can in any way be made better.

Looking Down.

"Risen with Him." Seated with Him! Then our outlook in life is not an upward, but a downward one. Here is the demand for Christian imagination. How does life look from Heaven? Think of our discontent in lowly places, our feverish longing for great work, our love of tinsel, our chafing under discipline, our hard judgments, our cherished grievances. How would they appear to us, seen from above? How do they look to Jesus? Put yourself in your true place, and judge accordingly. Our citizenship is in Heaven; let our conversation be heavenly.

Suggestion Rather than Definition.

Suggestion is generally better than Definition. There is a seeming dogmatism about Definition that is often repellent, while Suggestion, on the contrary, disarms suspicion and summons to co-operation and experiment. Definition provokes discussion. Suggestion provokes to love and good works. Defining is limiting, Suggestion is enlarging. Defining calls a halt; Suggestion

calls for an advance. Defining involves the peril of contentment: "I am here, I rest." "Thus far," says Definition, and draws a map. "Westward," cries Suggestion, and builds a boat.

Prejudgment.

Prejudge not lest ye be prejudiced. John the Baptist had his idea of what Jesus ought to be, and when Jesus did not conform to it, a doubt of his Messiahship was born. The Nazarite was perplexed by the Man of Nazareth. The ascetic could hardly believe that the friend of sinners and little children could be the promised one of God. The locust eater and camel-skin wearer had his doubt about the man who ate and looked like other people. "Judge nothing until the time comes," which means suspend judgment until you get at the kernel of the nut, whatever its burr; at the heart of man, whatever his exterior.

Success or Failure.

One of the commonest mistakes and one of the costliest is thinking that success is due to some genius, some magic,—something or other which we do not possess. Success is generally due to holding on, and failure to letting go. You decide to learn a language, study music, take a course

of reading, train yourself physically. Will it be success or failure? It depends upon how much pluck and perseverance that word "decide" contains. The decision that nothing can overrule, the grip that nothing can detach, will bring success. Remember the Chinese proverb, "With time and patience, the mulberry leaf becomes satin."

False Values.

When Abraham offered to Lot a choice of pastures, it seemed to Lot that fortune's favors had certainly come to him. So did it seem to the Israelites when God gave them quails, and to a later generation, when he let them have a king. So did it to Jonah, doubtless, when he found the ship going his way for Tarshish. But they were all mistaken. The watered plains may have looked pleasant to Lot, but they were the way to Sodom. The quails, and the king, and the ship for Tarshish would better have been let alone. The real point is, not whether things are going our way, but whether they are going God's way.

Letting Things Make the Best of Us.

To make the best of things in the right way is to let things make the best of us. My next duty may be one I do not enjoy; but for con-

science' sake to do it, as though I enjoyed it, is to be made a better man. Something that is a great delight to me knocks at my door. To make the best of it is not only to enjoy it heartily, but "heartily as unto the Lord" who let me have it. Then by my joys I am made a better man. So with sorrows and disappointments—they are not meant to disfigure, but to transfigure me. Live with God, and all things shall be his servants, and work together for our good and make the best of us.

Using Our Tools While We May.

A Christian should hold his tools in general with a loose hand, but in particular with a firm hand. No man knows when he may be deprived of his health, his money, his position, his friends; he must not set his heart on any one of them as a final good, as an essential blessing. But upon the tools he has, he must set his heart with great appreciation and concentration, that he may learn how to use each one so as to get the best results inside and out. Love not tools less but craftsmanship more. Work while you have your tools; the hour cometh when you may not have them.

Folly of Being Powerless.

If an electric car stands motionless on the tracks, it is nothing against the power of electricity. If an invalid has no appetite, and cannot go out of doors at night, it is no argument against things to eat and the joy of starlit air. If a man does not know a flower by name, or a poem by heart, it is no indictment of the beauty of a rose, or the charm of poetry. If we bear the name of Christ but give no other sign of him, if we go through the forms of godliness, but live powerless lives, it is a thousand reproaches to us. To be powerless when Christ has all power, and we can have all we want, is an arraignment to which we can make no answer that is not self-incriminating.

What is Honesty?

The root of honesty is an honest intention, the distinct and deliberate purpose to be true, to handle facts as they are, and not as we wish them to be. Facts lend themselves to manipulation. Many a butcher's hand is worth more than its weight in gold. What we want things to be, we come to see them to be; and the tailor pulls the coat and the truth into a perfect fit from his point of view.

Oh, to get life out of our sinful and selfish

desires, and "walk in the light as he is in the light," not wishing merely, but "willing to live honestly!"

God's Machinery.

This world is a machine shop to make mechanics of us. The machinery is not meant to hurt us. There is nothing accidental about it, though accidents occur while we are learning to manage it. If we lose our balance, and get a hand caught in the machinery, is it the fault of our Father in heaven? No. When we fall, it is against God's machinery, but it is also against God's will. Yet it is God's will that by that fall, and from that machinery, we should learn not to fall, learn how to use the machinery; that we should be expert through experience, workmen that need not be ashamed though they carry scars.

When Sympathy is Needed.

Sympathy is often better than comfort. Tears call for tears. "Jesus wept" by the grave of Lazarus, though in a moment he was to turn weeping into singing. Let us not tell a bumped child to be more careful, and say, "You will know better another time," but give the child our kisses and sympathy, and postpone the calculation

about moral values. Let suffering know the answering pain of our heart. The best sympathy is often voiceless,—the pressure of a hand, the tear-brimming look that says, "I cannot speak, but I have heard." Tears before truth for sorrow, otherwise truth may be wasted on unprofitable soil.

Good Listening.

"Take heed how ye hear" is a genuine monition touching happy relations—a real injunction under the law of love. Let us not think it applies only to the way we hear sermons. How do you listen to the conversation of your friends? With half-parted lips ready to break in with your own opinions? With the wandering eye of one evidently uninterested? Is this the love that helps another to be his best? Do you like to be well listened to? Mind, then, the give and take of love, and be a good listener, and for truth's sake as well as love's. Thoreau says, "It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and another to hear."

Is Death an Interruption?

Death can never interrupt a faithful Christian life. When we feel the touch upon our shoulder and hear the word whispered in our ear, we may

be at our work or on a journey, walking the street or asleep in our beds, praying at church or fishing in the country. What difference does it make? We are trying to please our God in what is our business just then. Sacred places and times have no superior advantage for the dying. Sacredness is in the motive of the heart that would do everything as unto the Lord, dying along with the rest. As Heaven is still the glad doing of God's will, where is there any interruption?

Showing Spirituality.

Spirituality is best manifested on the ground, not in the air. Rapturous day-dreams, flights of heavenly fancy, longings to see the Invisible, are less expensive and less expressive than the plain doing of duty. To have bread excite thankfulness and a drink of water send the heart to God is better than sighs for the unattainable. To plow a straight furrow on Monday or dust a room well on Tuesday or kiss a bumped forehead on Wednesday is worth more than the most ecstatic thrill under Sunday eloquence. Spirituality is seeing God in common things, and showing God in common tasks.

What is Good Hearing?

We hear most surely what we want to hear. Out of the interests of the heart the ears hear. "Take heed how ye hear" is a by-law under our moral constitution. What concerns us catches our attention. If kindergarten or photography, if recipes or servants or babies, are supreme in our thoughts, we hear about them on all sides. What kind of things make our ears prick up most quickly? The old poet, Rogers, said, "I have a very weak voice, and if I did not say ill-natured things, no one would hear what I said." He knew too well what interested most people. Could he have counted on us?

Why Does Your Tree Stand?

Ought not we who bear the name of Jesus, to ask ourselves whether we are keeping pace in new purposes and answering with devotion God's summoning gifts and challenging mercies? When the year is old or the year is young, and we think of the passing of life, it is a good thing to ask whether our trees justify the room they take and the nourishment they get in the Master's vineyard. Is your tree standing because "it brings forth more fruit"? or is it because of the mercy, the hope, the patience, of the Lord who inter-

cedes,—"Spare it yet another year; it may be it will bear fruit"? Let the goodness of God lead us to repentance and a better return in fruitfulness and fidelity for his loving care.

A Practical Way to Lay Down Your Life.

What does laying down of life mean to us? Are we willing to lay down our prejudices for the good of some brother, or some self-indulgence, that we may have some time and money to help a struggler out of the mire, to put hope and brightness into a darkened life? How about the dreadful things—things we can do without peril, but which the weaker brother, emboldened by our example, attempts to his utter demoralization and destruction? Let us specialize under the great appeal to lay down our lives for the brethren, and lay down some things much smaller, for the hope of being worth something. How else are we to escape the condemnation of those who enjoy pronouncing the Lord's name, but not doing his will?

Better than Worshipping the Bible.

The Bible is not a thing to be worshipped. A savage might bow down to a telescope, but an astronomer knows better. The way to know it

is to use it. It is not to be looked at, but to look through. To bind a Bible beautifully, to lift it reverently, to speak of it with admiration, to guard it with all care, is not at all to the point. Look through it. Find God with it. See what God was to the men of the Bible, and then let Him be the same to you. See the proofs of His power, and prove that power for yourself in yourself. Search the Scriptures for the testimony of Jesus, and honor them by being an honor to the one they reveal.

Doing and Knowing.

Doing and knowing are blood relations. "Obedience is the organ of spiritual vision"—so Robertson re-issued the truth, that, if we would know God's doctrine, we must do his will. Experiment and experience spring from the same root, and will not grow apart. Do you wish you had a Christian's experience? *Will* to make the Christian experiment. Will you know who Christ is, and what he can do for you? Obey him; do as he directs. Do not expect experience without experiment. "Follow me" was Christ's way of saying "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

Goodness and Usefulness.

Goodness conditions usefulness. A grimy hand may do a gracious deed, but a bad heart cannot. What a man says and what a man is must stand together,—must con-sist. His life can ruin his lips or fill them with power. It is what men see that gives value to what we say. Paul had the right order, "Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine." Being comes before saying or doing. Well may we pray, "Search me, O God! Reveal me to myself. Cleanse me from secret faults, that those who are acquainted with me, who know my down-sittings and my uprisings, may not see in me the evil way that gives the lie to my words."

Merit of Concealing Troubles.

To play a part can be good or bad. It is wrong for wickedness to try to pass itself off for goodness, but it is not wrong for a sad heart to try to hide itself behind a smiling face. The disappointed man is not bound to fly storm signals. There is no law that requires pain to be advertised. When locomotives can burn their own smoke, travelling will be pleasanter. There is no danger to the community from people carrying concealed troubles. "A merry heart maketh

a cheerful countenance." That is pleasant, but the credit comes in when a sad heart wears a glad countenance, for the sake of a world that needs more sunshine. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast."

Friend Necessity.

What a friend Necessity is! It stops our standing on one foot, it ends our looking at our watches, and wondering about three or four things; it moves the previous question; it says, "This one thing you do!" It is good discipline to conquer indecision, but it is better for us and for the world, knowing "what must be," to be about it. It saves time. Goethe spoke of the "dear must." Emerson calls a man's task his life-preserver. Let us recognize the purpose of God in the inevitable, and accept it gracefully, whether discipline or duty. Swift adjustment means peace and power. Necessity will then be but the iron band inside the golden crown.

Up or Down Stream.

Life and character tend either upward or downward, but a single act or characteristic may not indicate the tendency of a life as a whole. You

can make a saint out of the good qualities of bad men ; you can make a devil out of the bad qualities of good men. Esau eclipsed Jacob at first, but his virtues were accidents, incidents, without roots, and they withered before the hot tests of life. Jacob outshone Esau at last. Day by day he fought his natural badness, and won in the hard struggle with himself. The mean supplanter Jacob became the hero Israel, a prince with God. Is it thy will or my will be done ? Are we living to please Christ or to please ourselves ? Our answer to this question determines our life-current.

Securities Well Invested.

Success is not abundance of means, but of manhood. Heaven's beginnings are in us now, or the outlook is bad. Heaven is knowledge of God, loyalty to God, likeness to God, and joy and peace and love in the bud. Heaven begins here or nowhere. Jesus had no beatitudes for earthly success, gold, political power, social influence, but for meekness, hunger after righteousness, peacemaking, purity, patience. These are possessions death cannot spoil. Seek ye first his kingdom, and let things come and go as God wills. True wealth is not what my estate amounts to, but what I amount to. *Thou* art weighed is the timeless test, and character is the only eternal security.

Hope.

Failure will hurt but not hinder us. Disillusion will pain but not dishearten us. Sorrows will shake us but not break us. Hope will set the music ringing and quicken our lagging pace. We need hope for living far more than for dying. Dying is easy work compared with living. Dying is a moment's transition ; living, a transaction of years. It is the length of the rope that puts the sag in it. Hope tightens the cords and tunes up the heart-strings. Work well, then ; suffer patiently, rejoicing in hope. God knows all, and yet is the God of Hope. And when we have hoped to the end here, He will give us something to look forward to, for all eternity. For " hope abideth."

Life's Arena.

How utterly opposed to the thought of Jesus Christ is all asceticism, all religious isolation and retreat from the world. His aim was not to get his followers out of the world, but to get them into the world. Society, not solitude, is the natural home of Christianity. The Christian is not to flee from the contagion of evil, but to meet it with the contact of health and holiness. The church is not to be built on glass posts for moral insulation, but among the homes of common men

for moral transformation. What use is a light under a bushel? It must shine where there is darkness. The place of need is the field of duty, and though we are not to be of the world, we are to be first and last in the world and for the world.

Watching the Proportions.

A right relation is in wrong proportions when God's kingdom is obscured or forgotten. Christians have a right to make money; no one has a better right. But when money-making means such absorption of time and vitality, that Christian work and worship cannot be kept up, there the line is crossed between right and wrong. The making and beautifying of a home is work of a high order, but where it leaves no interest in the homes of the poor and degraded, and no time or money for saving the homeless, it becomes downright selfishness. Flesh is good, but too much in a runner balks the prize. Let us lay aside the extra weight, and train ourselves that we may so run as to obtain. The lawful must not lead to the loveless.

Honesty in Consecration.

We are more apt to see the comfort in the words "She hath done what she could," than the solemnity of them. They are a tender recogni-

tion, but a tremendous challenge. "What she could" means all she could. The Master compares us, not with others, but with ourselves. There is the mercy. But with our best selves, with our possible selves, there is the rub. What I did, subtracted from what I might have done, gives the bad remainder, the immoral debit, the moral discredit.

"There's a kindness in his justice that is more than liberty." Thank God for it, but let us not misunderstand the truth and think we are at liberty to do what we happen to feel like. Did the Lord say of Sapphira, "She hath done what she could"?

Now the Only Time.

God does not help his children now and then, but now, always now. There is no "then"; it exists only in imagination. The only time we ever actually need God is now. If "then" troubles us in imagination and we wonder what will become of us then, let us learn to live with God now. Form the habit of using God and being used of God, and the imaginary and dreadful "then" will be swallowed up in the stream of now when the time comes. No clocks keep time to-morrow. Springs push and hands point now. Now is the appointed time for clocks as well as

people. God never helped anyone to-morrow. He is a very present help. What is eternity, but God's now? Let us then live the eternal life with God now.

Seeing the Good.

Why is it that the bad side of life seems so much more conspicuous than the good? Is it because predominance of evil makes it more common, or that we being evil see it more readily, or that the abnormal, by its nature, stands out excrescent and disfiguring? Whatever the answer, it should be the ambition of every lover of goodness to make much of goodness, to sound its praises, to flavor his words with its appreciation. Part of hating evil is ignoring it, neglecting it. Thinking of things of good report and speaking of them strengthens good. Shutting our mouths as well as our ears against the bruit of evil, in the scorn of silence, weakens its hold upon us. What the redeemed of the Lord say should strengthen the side of the Lord of the redeemed.

Boundlessness of God's Purposes.

Let us beware of limiting God. Nothing is more foolish than to bound his purposes, especially in the matter of tuition, of the divine inten-

tion and discipline. What can iron ore in the furnace know of its fine and final uses, or a soul in affliction know of "the far-off interest of tears"? We have the minnow's right, as Carlyle puts it, to say what we find in our little creek, but no right to bound the river and ocean beyond our small ideas. Let us ever be subject to hope in our life's tasks, saying, "It is the Lord," strengthening ourselves with a cheerful faith that His purpose is eternal, alive with love, overleaping the last limit of what we ask or think.

Getting Ahead of Whom?

Our business in life is not to get ahead of other people, but to get ahead of ourselves. To break our own record, to outstrip our yesterdays by todays, to bear our trials more beautifully than we ever dreamed we could, to whip the tempter inside and out as we never whipped him before, to give as we never have given, to do our work with more force and a finer finish than ever,—this is the true idea,—to get ahead of ourselves. To beat some one else in a game, or to be beaten, may mean much or little. To beat our own game means a great deal. Whether we win or not, we are playing better than we ever did before, and that's the point after all—to play a better game of life.

Faithfulness First.

Swift runs and short cuts, so characteristic of our modern life, are great perils. We want everything in a hurry, but most good things are shy with strangers. Children want pieces on the piano before scales or training of that weak third finger. The poet says, "Wait a while." Life cries, "Work a long while." The unerring light of love and joy's security, of which Wordsworth writes, belong to the Ode to Duty. You long for perfection? Its root is perficiency—proficiency. Bury your conscientiousness in the field of your daily labor, and some day there will be flowers and fragrance fit for heaven. It has been said that "grace is the lovely result of forgotten toil."

Living Belief.

To know one or two truths deeply gives more power than a speaking acquaintance with a score. The living force in any man's creed is not in what he has traditionally accepted, but what he has made part of his daily life. Words that are "spirit and life" are indubitable and irresistible. Many truths, like things lawful, but not expedient, are true, but not indispensable. Whether certain things were so or not did not concern the man who knew one thing—"Whereas I was blind,

now I see." A veritable experience stands fire and water, and, put into words, becomes a man's living belief. What others have known, he may yet know; but he has made his own beginning, and is founded on a rock. If a man knows whom he has believed, he has eternal life, and will be led into all truth.

Genuine Christianity.

Christianity is not a voice in the wilderness, but a life in the world. It is not an idea in the air but feet on the ground, going God's way. It is not an exotic to be kept under glass, but a hardy plant to bear twelve manner of fruits in all kinds of weather. Fidelity to duty is its root and branch. Nothing we can say to the Lord, no calling him by great or dear names, can take the place of the plain doing of his will. We may cry out about the beauty of eating bread with him in his kingdom, but it is wasted breath and a rootless hope, unless we plow and plant in his kingdom here and now. To remember him at his table and to forget him at ours, is to have invested in bad securities. There is no substitute for plain, every-day goodness.

God's Knowledge of What We Shall Be.

Our heavenly Father has a way of looking at us, his children, that ought to be a great comfort and incentive to us. He sees, not merely what we are, but what we shall be. And, for the joy set before Him of the perfected work, He endures the days of crudeness and mistake. He sees the man in the child, the painting in the sketch, the angel in the marble. If He saw us only in ourselves, He would see us only as we are; but, seeing us in Christ, He sees beyond repentance and trust and struggle, beyond justification and sanctification and glorification, to the cap-stone of Christ-likeness; and "let every man that hath this hope in him purify himself, even as he is pure."

Sin.

Sin is unnatural, abnormal. Wrong means wrung; sin means wide of the mark; iniquity is inequity. Deformity, disfigurement, disgrace, all imply a falling away from the ideal. Jesus was natural. His life was the kind of life we were meant to live. He touched work and rest and play and thought and the out-door world, friends and children, and sickness and trouble, and everything, in the divinely natural way. He was unsociable only in sin. He could not be unnatural

and cross his Father's good and holy will. He gave the naturalness, the super-naturalness, of his life to cure the unnaturalness of ours. He related himself to sin only to remove it and redeem us from its power, that God might again say, "Very good" of all nature, and paradise be regained.

Christlike.

How easily and contentedly we speak of Jesus Christ as our example. Do we realize what it means? If we did, it would revolutionize our life. Do we begin to know our Bible as He did? Do we begin to pray as He did? How thoughtful He was for others, how patient toward dulness, how quiet under insult! Think of what it meant for Him to take a basin and towel like a slave and wash the disciples' feet! Do we stoop to serve? Can any one say of us, as was said of Him, that we go about "doing good"? Think of his words, servants of his, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

"Christlike" is a word often on our lips. Do not speak it too lightly. It is the heart of God's predestination. It is our high calling.

More than "I Am Sorry."

When Jesus said, "Repent," he meant more than a changed attitude toward sins that are past.

He meant a change of mind toward sin itself. It is not enough to say, "I am sorry I did those things that were wrong." We must see all that is sinful or may be sinful in a different light. Repentance means another way of thinking, a new attitude toward the future as well as the past.

The Psalmist did not merely look back and say, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and thou forgavest its iniquity," but said, as he looked ahead, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way."

Folly of Trifling with Trifles.

Trifles are trifles only to triflers. To the thoughtful they are symptoms of peril, signs of hope, opportunities of love. To ignore trifles is to be ignorant of the spot where decisions are made and destinies determined. Railroads figure, not on dollars and cents, but on fractions of mills; and we have discovered of late that God plows and harrows his fields with earth-worms, and puts the burden of his creation on beasts that can swarm through the eye of the needle. Awake to the significance of the insignificant! for you are in a world that belongs, not alone to the God of the Infinite, but to the God of the Infinitesimal.

Holding in the Bad Bacilli.

A sure cure for gossip and slander is to breathe through your nose—keep your mouth shut. A certain amount of your dying body (for you die daily, momentarily) floats off on your breath into the air. And God has filled the world with plant life to absorb such products, such effete and poisonous material. But gossip and slander on your outgoing breath have only people to absorb them. The flowers, happily for their fragrance, have no way of taking them in. Be good enough to the air, good enough to people, to let all wickedness and malice remain inside you. Germs of love, bacilli of brotherliness, will eat them up, and you will be strong and beautiful and beloved.

Making Duty a Delight.

How deep rooted, how gloriously pathetic, is the idea of moral order. Man has never been without it; it is part of his make-up, his stock in trade. Let him believe in no god, like the Buddhist; in two gods, like the Zoroastrian; in many gods, like the Greek; or in one God, like the Jew and Christian—he yet holds to a supreme ideal of moral order. Rooted in the heart of man is the sense of duty as profound within as the starry heavens are exalted without. There is

something he owes himself, his fellows, and his God, which becomes his "ought," something due which is his "duty." He is "haunted forever by the eternal mind." Appeal to this sense of right in children, reverence and obey it in ourselves, clarify, dignify, glorify it in the light of Jesus Christ, and one day duty and delight will be one.

Disposition.

Have you ever said, "I wish I had a more cheerful disposition"? How much do you wish it? Enough to dispose yourself so as to be in the way of getting it? Your words are idle and sinful unless you will to have it instead of wishing to have it. You are not responsible for the disposition you were born with, but you are responsible for the one you die with.

Everything you carelessly or seriously propose to do affects what you are disposed to do. You are disposed to look on the dark side, borrow trouble, and say discouraging things. Suppose you earnestly propose for one week to look for pleasant things, and speak of them, and never speak of what you dread or do not like. You will be more cheerfully and happily disposed at the end of the week, and you know it. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Contentment.

Contentment is not satisfaction. It is the grateful, faithful, fruitful use of what we have, little or much. It is to take the cup of Providence, and call upon the name of the Lord. What the cup contains is its contents. To get all there is in the cup is the act and art of contentment. Not to drink because one has but half a cup, or because one does not like its flavor, or because some one else has silver to one's own glass, is to lose the contents; and that is the penalty, if not the meaning of discontent. No one is discontented who employs and enjoys to the utmost what he has. It is high philosophy to say, we can have just what we like, if we like what we have; but this much at least can be done, and this is contentment,—to have the most and best in life, by making the most and best of what we have.

To-Day.

No loving word was ever spoken, no good deed ever done, "to-morrow." We cannot act in the unborn future, nor in the dead past—only in the living present. That is why "every day is a dooms-day," for to-day holds life and death, character and destiny, in its hands. Opportunity says with Jesus, "Me ye have not always." We

say: "I will take my chances. There is plenty of time." Ah, how often do we say, "some other time," to find that there is no other time! Some things we can do "not always." How shall we find out what things can be done any time, and what things now or never? Only by living in the faith that to-day is the only day we have and challenging every opportunity for its meaning. Esau filled his life with regret for trifling one day; Esther's was full of glory for one day's courage. Peter slept one hour, and lost a matchless opportunity. Mary's name is fragrant forever for the loving deed of a day. Do your best *now*.

Obligation to Receive.

It is not so hard to receive as it is to have to receive. To be obliged to take a gift makes us agree swiftly with the words of the Lord Jesus when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Then we see that it is harder to take gracefully the kindnesses of our friends, than even their buffetings for our faults. But when we must receive, then that is the will of God for us, and just then more beneficial to us than giving. Some one must receive, if another is to give. We must be willing, not only to serve, but to be served; not only to bear others' burdens, but let others bear ours; not only to minister to the sick, but to be

simply and thankfully ministered unto ; not only give, but receive. It is sometimes the will of God that we should let others do the will of God, and ourselves be the occasions instead of the authors of kindness.

Foggy Mornings.

Fog in one's spiritual life need be no more lasting than that in nature. "It will burn off before long." How often weather-wise people say this when the gray mists of the sea-shore depress the hearts that were longing for a bright day ; and so it proves. A glow of silver in the sky near the sun, a thinning out here and there of the vapory shroud ; glimpses of blue, clean outlining and swift sailing away of the clouds, and the fine clear day is here long before noon. We might oftener save ourselves from heavy hearts and gloomy faces, when early morning shows gray in our lives, or other lives about us. Mists are left over from a storm yesterday. The day closed on a misunderstanding. The morning is foggy and depressing. Why talk about it? Let the weather alone. Fog is shallow. It will burn off before long. There is a good warm sun of love at work, and the blue sky will soon be over us.

Deathlessness.

Death is a great preacher of deathlessness. The protest of the soul against death, its reversion, its revulsion, is a high instinct of life. Dissatisfaction in his world who satisfieth the desire of every living thing has a grip on the future.

As far as this goes, he has the least assurance of immortality who can be best satisfied with eating and drinking and "things"; he has the surest hope of ongoings and far distances who does not live by bread alone, whose eye is looking over the shoulder of things, whose ear hears mighty waters rolling evermore, who has "hopes naught can satisfy below." The limits of which death makes us aware, make us aware of life's limitlessness. The wing whose stretch touches the bars of its cage knows it was meant for an "ampler ether and diviner air."

Principles Rather than Rules.

Rules are good, but principles are better. Rules may contradict, confuse; principles are constant, consistent. To live by rule is too often to miss the nobler mastery, the mental and moral developing of principle. To live by principle is to be led to the best rules. When Jesus spoke of going two miles with the one who asked for

one mile's companionship, of giving the extra cloak, of turning the other cheek, he was not laying down rules, but lifting up principles. Washing the disciples' feet and bidding us do as he did was not a rule, but a principle; otherwise it could only be an oriental idiom, whereas now it is a universal idea. Given the idea, the idiom will follow. The greater involves the less. Principle is prophetic, genetic, dynamic. Love will take care of politeness, for it is its heart, and the heart vitalizes the hands; but rules of etiquette and deportment are no guarantee of love.

Working Out Salvation.

No man can work up his own salvation, but every Christian who has received it must work it out in his own life. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," was written, not to unbelievers, but to "the saints who were in Christ Jesus at Philippi." We work for Jesus, not for salvation; not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Salvation is not a property to be bought, but to be developed, a talent to be traded with, an idea to be realized, a theme to be worked out, "with fear and trembling," not lest we should not be saved, but lest we should misrepresent our Saviour. And what cheer and what encouragement in the words, "for it is God who worketh in

you." What in-spiration, en-ergy, en-thusiasm ! Work out God's thought, for God works with you, and in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

A Good World.

This is the best possible world for one who is called according to God's purpose, or purposes according to God's calling. We are infected with infidelity when we sigh for the wings of a dove. We sing, "God is wisdom, God is love." If we believe it, we shall act as though we believe it, and face our tasks with fidelity and our tests with fortitude. God knows why we are here, and has told us,—to learn and to do, for discipline and duty. Can we imagine a world better fitted for those ends than this world ? How long we are to suffer or serve is for God to say. Let us not look too much out of the school-room windows or too impatiently at the clock. When God's time for us comes, well and good. Till then, this world is the best for us, and we must make the most of it, and do our best for it.

The Ascension.

The ascension of Christ added distance to definiteness in worship. Definiteness we must have, as every craving for a theophany, every instinct

of idolatry proves. "Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us" is prompted by this feeling. The Incarnation is God's response to this human need. But imagine Jesus living on indefinitely after the resurrection, even under the earthly conditions which obtained during those forty days!

Worship demands the far distances of God; it protests against the little, the near, the material. It must love but it must look up. It cannot live without the note of spirituality and universality, if not mystery. The ascension, the passing of Christ within the veil, answers this need. So does a full-robed Christianity add to definiteness of knowledge the outreach of imagination and home.

A Habit Worth Forming.

There is a quality about all we do to please our Father that redeems the lowliest task from insignificance, puts hope in the most monotonous duty, and dignifies the smallest annoyance. If we think of life as our opportunity in which to form the habit of doing everything to please Him, nothing is trivial. The care of our bodies, the orderly arrangement of our clothes, books, papers, tools, keeping accounts, meeting engagements, politeness to strangers, kindness to servants,

thoughtfulness for the aged, gentleness to children, our manners at home, abroad, in church, in society,—all are opportunities of showing whose we are, and whom we serve. Whether we eat or drink, give or receive a cup of cold water, or whatever we do, we can strengthen the habit of pleasing God. This is the habit best worth cultivating, for it will outlive life, and keep pace with eternity.

A Specialist.

No more ardent specialist than Paul ever lived. For him to live was Christ. Every thought was brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. His tent-making was that Christ's name should bear no reproach; his sickness and weakness were Christ's opportunity; his success was a wreath for his Lord. Whatever grace of a Greek, discipline of a Roman, conscientiousness of a Hebrew, was his, he used it to lure Greeks, Romans, Jews to Christ. It was universal subordination for one supreme purpose: "Christ shall be magnified in me, whether it be by life or by death."

Such a life to-day, bearing in every part the seal of the Lord Jesus, each one of us who seeks to glorify the Lord in working or witnessing, doing or bearing, can live.

Looking Backward.

The pain, the unnaturalness, the seeming cruelty of early death, would be mitigated, if we could get a larger perspective and a better sense of proportion. If we are all going abroad, and the steamer sails at five o'clock, some of us may go aboard at nine in the morning, and some at noon, some at three o'clock in the afternoon, and some at the last moment, just as the plank is being drawn. That day, the time of embarking may seem of much importance, but when we are all out and the land-line has dipped below the horizon, will it seem of great importance that some went aboard a little earlier, or some a little later? Should we not comfort ourselves with the thought that, after all, the real life is so great that the distances and delays and waitings of this life will be closed up in the far-away shore line, and sorrow and sighing flee away forever when the redeemed of the Lord get home?

A Pattern for Us All.

Science is teaching us lessons concerning the physical structure of the universe. The same stuff is ablaze in Sirius and the Sun and the flaming heart of the earth, and so Jesus Christ gives us the moral unity of all the worlds. The setting

of the next life we can little imagine, but this we know, that God's ideal of life is Jesus Christ. We are to be like him. That is the real predestination. He who in both worlds delighted to do his Father's will, suffered with brave hope, obeyed with changeless fidelity, served with supreme, unfailing love, is the universal type. God tells us that it is enough to be like him. The words he uttered "Good and faithful" are negotiable in both worlds. Character and capacity are all of life that we can take with us when death swings open the door from this into the next room in our Father's house.

Uselessness of Altruism Without Christ.

Altruism means other-ism. "Do unto others as you would that men should do unto you." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Let every man seek not his own welfare, but the welfare of another." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Altruism announces itself to-day as though it were an independent system, a new discovery. It is but a cutting from the Christian plant. There is no hope for any abiding life apart from its Christian root. Altruism without Christ is a Christian after-glow, a spent Christian bullet. It is to say,

"Cut down the tree; all we want is the shadow," or, "I do not need the sun; the twilight is sufficient." Christ alone is the power of God and the power of a goodness which can realize and sustain itself in service or sacrifice for others.

The Witness of Life.

Christ's life was a more substantial and effectual self-revelation to mankind than his teachings. We can hardly doubt that the influence of his life was more powerful than that of his words in leading his disciples to believe in him. What the disciples saw must have led them quite as certainly to recognize his divinity as what they heard. His attitude toward sin and hypocrisy, trouble and bereavement; his behavior with open enemies and deceitful friends; his bearing under falsehood and insults and suffering—all constitute a divine testimony, without which his teachings would have lacked their divinest authority. He chose the twelve "to be with him." When they had learned to know, not his doctrines, but himself, then he could send them forth. Knowing him, they could not be moved. What emphasis this puts upon Paul's words to Timothy and to us: "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine."

Speaking a Ship.

How interesting the meeting and greeting and passing of those ships in the desert—Philip and the Ethiopian officer! Only a look and a voice, then light, brotherhood and joy. Philip had something to give, and there was something the officer longed for. One had the joy of giving, the other of receiving; each went on his way rejoicing, a better man.

Does the Providence of God often bring us within hailing distance of each other? Are you seeking the light, conscious of a want? Remember God's promises, if you are in earnest, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst," "Every one that seeketh findeth." Or are you a Philip, an expert in the way of Christ? If so, should you meet one who is groping for light and hungry for the true bread, you can tell him straightway of Christ. Do you know the way so well that you can show it to some one else and send him away rejoicing?

"Either Pull, or Bail, or Cut Bait."

Work is a privilege, and work is a duty. This is true in every sphere of life and in all spheres. No sphere is so exalted as to lift its members above the importance and gain of earnest toil, and

no sphere is so low as to bring its members below the possibility of this blessing. Paul said of Christian brethren in his day, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." That is sound and sensible counsel for any day. "Either pull, or bail, or cut bait," was the imperative order in a leaky fishing boat at a distance from the shore. All were to work in some way. Wherever we are, there is something for us to do for ourselves and our fellows. Let us help to make progress, or try to fight leaks, or, at all events, help those who are working. "Either pull, or bail, or cut bait." If we refuse to do one of them, we have no claim on the limited supply of rations.

God's Love is Eternity.

It is the "where I am" that makes heaven. The life after death might become through its very endlessness a burden to our spirits, if it were not to be filled with the infinite variety and freshness of God's love. Some have shrunk from its very infinitude, because they have not realized what God's love can make of it. Human love helps us to understand this. When we have come to love any one with all our power of affection, then there is no monotony or weariness in the days and hours we spend with them. We begin to look with jealousy on anything that may

interrupt our intercourse with them, and to look forward with joyfulness to the prospect of having long and happy days with them. It is God's presence which will make the life after death one of endless joy. "That where I am, ye may be also," He has said.

Captivity.

Did the Jews have to lose their home and go into captivity because God decided that it would be a good way to punish them? Was it a decision of God's just then? Was it not rather the working out of laws and penalties which concern all times and all peoples? Was it persecution,—a personal intent to hurry them, to punish them at that point in their history, or certain timeless con-secutions, consequences, which in God's world belong to the violated moral order? Both elements were present, personal and legal, because God is in the carrying out of his laws. God and his laws work together and any nation will find as did the Jews, that obedience and freedom, disobedience and captivity, still travel together in His train. If we are to be glad in this or any world, we must make His ways our ways, and His will our will, "whose service is perfect liberty."

Acknowledging Mistakes.

It is hard to admit that we are wrong. How easy to say, "The woman, the serpent, my temperament, my circumstances!" Few things more surely reveal our self-love and pride than this instinctive, automatic excuse-making. We thoroughly understand the lawyer who asked the question, "And who is my neighbor?" wishing to "justify himself." There is little hope for our growth in virtue, unless we make up our minds frankly to admit the truth about ourselves, no matter how it hurts. No man can afford to play ostrich. Self-deception is seldom genuine, and conscious duplicity ruins. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." To acknowledge our mistakes is not only wise, and marks an advance in self-knowledge, but it means self-mastery, spiritual victory. When we pull up a weed, we leave a clean place for a flower.

Transmutation.

Can we include our mistakes and sins in the "all things" that work together for good? Certainly, if we belong to God, if love and loyalty to Him are our heart's determination, if we are purposed to press toward the mark of His high calling in Christ Jesus. The pride and self-

confidence of Peter were weakness, and were breaking him down as a disciple, but when he yielded himself to the spirit of Christ, they became self-knowledge, self-distrust, self-hatred, and the occasion and demands for divine power. The lives of St. Augustine, of John Newton, of Jerry McAuley, prove that the God of transmutation, who taught us to bring brilliant dyes, healing remedies, exquisite perfumes, from waste coal-tar, can transform the character that is put in his hands and make a repudiated past thrillingly vital in the sympathy and pity, fidelity and love, of a beautiful and fruitful future.

A Message.

If a telegraph messenger comes to your door, do you shut it in his face, or run away? What is the use? You cannot change the fact of the message he brings. You take the despatch with a steady or unsteady hand, and read it, and do what seems best. So should we treat our sorrows. They are messengers. What have they to tell us? There is no use in running away or in getting angry. Meet them frankly, quietly, bravely. Ask them what word they have for you. Say: "So you have come, my sorrow. What is your errand? What message do you bring from my Father? What new lesson does He wish me to

learn ?" Or look over the errand boy's shoulder, and say to your Heavenly Father, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Not to do this is to be doubly impoverished, for we lose our happiness, and then lose the sorrow too. Let us not frustrate the grace of God, who would even by our woes lead us nearer to Himself.

Disgrace of a Joyless Life.

Many men fail to realize that joy is distinctly moral. It is a fruit of the spiritual life. We have no more right to pray for joy, if we are not doing the things that Jesus said would bring it, than we would have to ask interest in a savings bank in which we had never deposited money. Joy does not happen. It is a flower that springs from roots. It is the inevitable result of certain lines followed and laws obeyed, and so a matter of character. Therefore, we cannot say that joy is like a fine complexion, a distinct addition to the charm of the face, which yet would be structurally perfect without this charm. Joy is a feature, and the face that does not have it is disfigured. The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God, and a disgrace to itself. "These things have I spoken unto you," said Jesus, "that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy

might be full." Study these words. Believe them. Attempt them. Steadily accomplish them, and the joy of the Lord will enter you before you hear the word, "Come, ye blessed, enter into the joy of your Lord."

Business vs. Religion.

Business is religion, and religion is business. The man who does not make a business of his religion has a religious life of no force, and the man who does not make a religion of his business has a business life of no character. The circle of business activity is not tangent to the circle of God's service, but concentric, a little circle in a great one. The word: "Whatsoever ye do in word and deed, *do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus," is the death of the secular. If the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and the body is the Lord's and the spirit thereof, no activity (sin excluded) can be profane, that is—"outside the shrine." The world is God's workshop; the raw materials are His; the ideals and patterns are His; our hands are "the members of Christ," our reward His recognition. Blacksmith or banker, draughtsman or doctor, painter or preacher, servant or statesman, must work as unto the Lord, not merely making a living, but

devoting a life. This makes life sacramental, turning its water into wine. This is twice blessed, blessing both the worker and the work.

Circumstances.

There is more cause for joy than for complaint in the hard and disagreeable circumstances of life. Browning said, "I count life just a stuff to try the soul's strength on." Spell the word "discipline" with a final *g*,—"discipling." We are here to learn Time's lesson for Eternity's business. What does it signify if the circumstances about us are not of our choice, if by them we can be trained, learning the lessons of patience, fortitude, perseverance, self-denying service, acquiescence with God's will, and the hearty doing of it. Circumstances do not make character. The noblest character can emerge from the worst surroundings, and moral failures come out of the best. Just where you are, take the things of life as tools, and use them for God's glory; so you will help the kingdom come, and the Master will use the things of life in cutting and polishing you so that there shall some day be seen in you a soul conformed to his likeness.

Kinship in Kindness.

Kindness is recognizing another's kinship. It is first kinned-ness to our own, and then kinnedness to everyone. When we recognize God's relation to us, we all become relatives, and must be kindred to each other, even as God in Christ is revealed kinned to us. The kind man does not say merely what he feels like saying; that would be adaptation to his own moods, and only self-love. He says what he thinks another needs to hear. Kindness relates you not to your own mood, but to the mood of the other man. To say a pleasant thing because you feel pleasant may be an accidental kindness, for it may meet another's need, but, though good, it is not highly virtuous. Genuine kindness oftenest comes from self-repression,—a cheerful message from a sad soul, a brave word from a trembling heart, a generous gift from a slender purse, a helping hand from a tired man. It is not your mood, but the other man's need, that determines kindness.

The Ethics of Perfection.

Perfection is not so much reaching, as "reaching forth." It is an attitude more than an attainment. Its hope is attainment, but its heart is intention. Attempt to-day and accomplish; but,

succeed or fail, to-day or to-morrow, still attempt. You may not accomplish your purpose, but you are a more accomplished man for the attempt, and that was God's purpose. To do your best every day betters your best. That is the perfecting God seeks.

The child's patchwork blocks may be "over and overed" with stitches that call up a rail fence, and show no lack of honest soil; but, if the block to-day is bounded by a steadier fence than yesterday's, and knows a little "more freedom from earth stains," then perfection is in the air: Per-ficiency is the root of proficiency. Goodness and faithfulness are the hands and feet of attainment, for perfection in God's sight is not the opposite of defects, but of defection.

The Inevitable.

To face the inevitable is to confront something sacred. As long as anything is uncertain, the roads are open in more than one direction, and right and wrong may have many aspects. But let the issue be determined, let the die be cast, and acceptance and adjustment become our immediate duty. Until God's will is known, we may work and wrestle and pray to carry our point, to save the day, to win the prize, spurred only the more by the uncertainty of the result.

But let the result be known, however dark and disappointing, and we should view it in the light of God's plan to make us his evident children, and ask what we are to learn, what next we are to do. Chafing, fretting and complaining are more than a waste of time and energy. End that episode with an amen. Refer the inevitable to God, and face the future, not only with knowledge born of new experience, but with the courage born of the faith, that God's will is always best, and sooner or later will seem best to us.

Normal and Abnormal.

There is no virtue in being miserable. Things are not necessarily our duty because they are disagreeable. Religion ought not to wear mourning nor should spirituality be depressing.

If Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, root and shoot, flower and fruit, are we to perpetuate or sanctify any of them? No; we are to protest, repudiate, eradicate. Learn any lesson of fortitude or patience during the struggle, but push on to wholeness.

Stump-pulling can develop muscle, but who would praise or preserve the stumps in a field as a home gymnasium? Crops are what we want. Joy, soundness, power, are normal. We are to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"—

wholeness. Pain and sickness, shadows and sorrows, are meant to flee away. Let us hurry them all we can by hastening His coming, who is our life and light, the health of our countenance, and our God.

Living Down Consequences.

The natural consequences of sin or the consequences of an unnatural life are not obliterated by God's forgiveness. The world in which we live is planned as an immense demonstration of the value of virtue and the folly and danger of vice. The results of sin, the scars of fire, the consequences of dishonesty, impurity, intemperance, unkindness, survive the moment of forgiveness, and breed their brood,—how long, who shall say? But forgiveness, which is a changed relation to God, begins a changed relation to his law. We start afresh with Him, loved, regarded as though nothing had happened, and a new set of consequences begins. The new life which God gives fights the consequences of the old. Weeds are pulled up, and stop seeding themselves. Broken relations are repaired, old debts paid, and wrongs righted. Moral degeneration is arrested. The demonstration of God's law is made on the side of obedience, through good, instead of bad, consequences.

Alienating Power of Sin.

Sin brings separation from God. The word "depart" uttered to the workers of iniquity is not an arbitrary one. It voices a law of God that runs through all his moral realm. Sin pushes the prodigal away from his home and friends, his property, his pleasures, his reputation, his character, even his clothes and his food. The law of the word "depart" has driven him away from everything that was beautiful and of good report. Behold him in his rags and loneliness—feeding swine. Think it not strange, if that man is driven from God and goodness who yields himself to sin. By a changeless law of moral repulsion, he is pushed away. Is it hopeless? Yes, as long as his back is turned toward God. But let him "come to himself," let him feel his sin and degradation, let him long for home, for forgiveness, for his Father's face, and the law of changeless love takes hold of him. The law of divine attraction draws him then to God and goodness.

Providence.

The word "providential" should be associated more in its interpretation with the world of grace than the world of law. We are in a world of laws, God's laws, living between the two old

mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. Obedience and blessing go hand in hand. Disobedience and trouble are indissolubly linked. We must not interpret providences so that the consequences of our mistakes and sins are thought of as original choices of God, then and there; that death, for example, from pneumonia, is a "mysterious dispensation of providence." It is not to be thought that God is constantly interfering with the processes of law. But this is to be thought, and is blessedly true, that this is God's world and our school-house, our training ground; that all things are providential in the sense that they are in the scope of God's immediate knowledge—from the fall of a sparrow to the tower of Siloam; and, best of all, that all things can become "means of grace" and lead us toward God-likeness.

Joy in All Things.

"Joy" is a larger word than "happiness" or "amusement" or "diversion." It includes all of these, but much else, — trials, tests and tasks. Happiness is a thing of happenings. Amusement is turning aside to muse, or cultivating the Muses after work. Diversion is being put on another track for a little while. But joy belongs to all that happens, and to work as well as to amusement or diversion. It is like a good appetite and

a good stomach, it likes and digests everything. Everything is kindling for its fire, wheat for its barns, fish for its net. It finds in work co-operation with God, however lowly or monotonous the task. It suffers and endures for that which is to be when the work is done, when the iron becomes steel, and rough marble a thing of beauty. In temptation, it finds the warrior's delight; in victory and in defeat, if an honorable one, the comfort of knowing that God understands every campaign; if a dishonorable one, the sad but hopeful joy of honest repentance and a new determination.

Over-Sensitiveness.

Hyper-Sensitiveness may come from overwork or illness, or from plain selfishness. To be easily annoyed is to be sick or selfish. When we are played out or worked out, our nerves are worn to the quick, and writhe at the touch of trifles. Then—rest for our lives. We cannot afford not to. But there is an irritability that is not physical. It is moral — or immoral. It comes from being self-centred. We live, but will not let live. We want our way any way. If we are interrupted, we are visibly annoyed. Interference, corrections, suggestions, light our fire-crackers, and we explode. Other people's pleasures and

pains, their children, cats and dogs and canary birds, are impertinences. Why? Because they do not pertain to us. This is plain selfishness. Let us beware. It is the spirit, the essence of evil. Let us go to the cross of Jesus and learn to love. We shall always be in relations in the world. Let us make them loving relations. Let us look out for hyper-sensitiveness. It means peril for body and soul.

The Test of Possessions.

The young ruler went away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions." Yes; but he went away sorrowful because he did not possess them—they possessed him. Jesus did not ask all rich men to give up their riches. The test that he put upon this one was to open his eyes that he might see that God was not supreme in his life. He thought and went away, how unhappy! He had thought he was within a step of perfection, for he had been keeping all the commandments. Had he kept them because God was first in his life? Gold, not God, mastered him. But he may have been a conqueror finally. He did not know Jesus then as he may have known him later at Calvary. After Pentecost, many who had lands sold them, and laid the price at the Apostles' feet. "And you must love him ere to you he will seem

worthy of your love." And you must know him and be helped by his spirit ere you can make the supreme renunciation. When you know Jesus better, as you can if you wish, you will be able to do anything he asks you to do. "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." It is Jesus who can make us live, having all things and yet possessing nothing—pleasing him first and always, with or without great possessions.

That Which Cannot be Taken Away.

When the soldiers cast lots for Jesus's garments, why did they not do so for his goodness and wisdom and gentleness? Because such things are not detachable, nor transferable. His garment was a thing material, made by hand. It could be taken away and destroyed by hand. The character of Jesus was not a thing. It was spiritual, woven of ideas, choices, emotions, victories. It was vital, not material; it was spiritual, indestructible. Men took everything that Jesus had, his liberty, his legal rights, his physical beauty, his reputation, his life,—but they could not take away what he was. Even on the cross he proved his infinite love in the thought for his mother, in opening the kingdom of heaven to that first believer, in praying for the men who crucified him. Without power or friends or

money, or even a garment, the centurion cried out, "Truly this man is the Son of God!" So the real values of life are internal, not external; and what counts with God—and sooner or later with men—is, not what a man has, but what he is.

God's Answer.

Let us not forget the emphasis and miss the comfort of the words "know how" in the verse: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children." Are the honest, earnest prayers of God's children always heard? Always. Are they always answered? Always. In the way we expect? Not always. If a hungry child asks for a scorpion, will his father give him a scorpion? Not if he knows how to give his children good things to eat. If he is asked for a stone, for "that which is not bread," by a child driven by hunger, but deceived by appearances, will he mistake the child's inner need and real meaning?

Because our Heavenly Father knows how to give good gifts, we may ask with perfect confidence for what we want. He will give what is best. We often know how to ask more intelligently the next time because of the answer we get.

The promise is kept, and we have learned something new about God's purposes and resources.

Fitness.

When James and John asked Jesus for the best places in his kingdom, they were told in his gentle, gracious way that the main point was not wanting the best places but being worth them. It is a question of preparation—"For whom they are prepared" is only another way of saying for those who are prepared.

We are so used to favoritism in public life that we turn every way for enough influence to get ourselves appointed. But perfect governments are officered, not by official favorites, but by qualified men. "God is no respecter of persons." He does not look twice at a man's petition and signatures. It is wholly a question of personal fitness. Let us put the emphasis of our life, then, in the right place. It is not wanting something, but being worth something. God has plenty of time in which to make discoveries, but we have none too much time in which to become worth discovering. We should care, not so much about being recognized as about being worth recognition. The real values of life are spiritual and eternal, and the fit man will some day succeed the favorite.

The Abundant Life.

Christ said, "I am come that ye might have life." Life is back of love, back of believing, back of hoping, back of everything. Ezekiel in his vision of the "River of Life," understood life; he knew what it meant — at first a little stream to the ankles, then, as he went further on, it came to the knees, and then to the loins, and finally a wide, mighty river. That is life. Do you know what life is? No; neither does anybody else. Life is indefinable; life is an ultimate; life is God; life is effectiveness; life is power. Adjustment to the things around you —correspondence to environment—that is life. The plodding man does not live. He goes out in the morning and hears the birds, the heralds of the spring, sweetly singing in the trees. The flowers are blooming in the fields, the whole world is full of music, it is everywhere; but the sweet primrose growing on the bank does not for him contain life and beauty and music — it remains a primrose still. Life is measured by the number of things you are alive to. The fulness of our life means what we are about to do. I must have a life that is more abundant than my own poor nature. I must take the power of Jesus and have inside fellowship with him.

"Rejoice Evermore.

Joy is an instinct as well as a duty. Nature enjoys her struggles; all her ways of conflict, work, and rest betray a spirit of alacrity, of gladness. "In reason's ear they all rejoice." Nature groans and travails, but rejoices as a strong man to run a race, struggling toward her highest and best. Paul tells us to rejoice, and we know we ought to, and want to, but it seems a challenge to powerlessness. There is too much to make us miserable. But when he tells us to rejoice in the Lord, he gives us a new idea. Hope comes to the rescue,—and hope is not a fancy, but a prophecy, a force, with power for its own realization. An artist may be depressed as he sees how poorly he embodies his vision, but there is an unspeakable joy in the work; he glories in his dream. A musician with his heart full of inaudible harmony is beaten down with disappointment at his failure to give voice to his conceptions, but he knows, as he strives, the joy of the hope set before him. So, however much there is about me and in me to provoke despair, when I look to Jesus and see God's thought of me, see what He means me to be, and what I mean to be, I cannot but rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Stewardship.

Property is a divine trust. Things are tools, not prizes. Life is not for self-indulgence, but for self-devotion. When, instead of saying, "The world owes me a living," men shall say, "I owe the world a life," then the kingdom will come in power. We owe everything to God but our sins. Fatherland, pedigree, home-life, schooling, Christian training, — all are God's gifts. Every member of the body or faculty of mind is ours providentially. There is no accomplishment in our lives that is not rooted in opportunities and powers we had nothing to do with in achieving. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" If God gives us the possibilities and the power to get wealth, to acquire influence, to be forces in the world, what is the true conception of life but divine ownership and human administration? "Of Thine own we render Thee." All there is of "me" is God's estate, and I am his tenant and agent. On the day of our birth a new lease is signed. On the day of our death, accounts are closed. Our fidelity is the interest on God's principal. "That I may receive mine own with interest," is the divine intention. So live, that when thy summons comes to give an account of thy stewardship, it may be done with joy, and not with grief!

Discouragement.

Disappointing facts do not warrant discouraging conclusions. It is not likely that Caleb and Joshua were delightfully exhilarated by the sight of the giants and the walled cities, any more than the ten other spies were. The giants were actually no bigger, and the walls actually no higher to the ten than to the two. The facts were the same, but Caleb and Joshua concluded differently. Why? Because they included differently. The ten faced the situation by themselves, the two faced it with God. The ten judged God in sight of their difficulties, and said, "It cannot be done." The two judged the difficulties in the sight of God and said, "We are well able." If, in the bright lexicon of youth, there is no such word as fail, so, in the records of our lives as Christians who trust in the living God, there never should be written, "And they brought back a discouraging report." Let the odds be against us, and obstacles seem insurmountable, we have but to include the Almighty in faith, and ourselves in fidelity, and let God draw conclusions. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged," is the divine intention concerning every soul, trustful and true.

Worth Believing.

Words carry little weight without a life back of them. What would have been the use of Andrew's saying to his brother Simon, "We have found the Christ," if Andrew had not been a man whose life was evidently and unmistakably bent toward good? Peter believed in Christ because he believed in Andrew. Was Andrew thoughtless? Far from it. But there was a trend in his life, an evident determination to know and be the best, which made it likely that what he found was worth finding, and what he said worth believing. If Andrew's temper had blazed and no apology followed; if he had been selfish and complaining, with no evidence of shame and struggle; if the whole emphasis of his life had been on things, eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, playing, gossiping, what likelihood of Peter's paying attention to his words? But Andrew hungered and thirsted for righteousness. He heard of John the Baptist, and followed him. He heard of a greater than John, and found in him the Promised One. Andrew's life turned toward God, and so his words had power. Does your brother believe you when you say anything about Jesus Christ? If he does, it is because you are evidently his follower. Only by the force of his life can a man say, "You believe in me, believe therefore in Jesus Christ."

Friendship and Right.

Many a sin is committed that friendship is expected to justify. It is not exactly what we would have done if we had been left to ourselves to decide, but, under the circumstances, we could not see what else to do. Rather than to be disobliging, rather than to be thought puritanical or "righteous over much," we yield, waive the obligation to conscience in favor of the desire to oblige a friend, and charge the debt of conscience to the score of kind feeling. But it is at bottom a question of allegiance. The Master asks an undivided heart, and we have no right to betray him in the home of our friends. To hate father and mother and friends for his sake is ethical, not emotional. It is a question of loyalty. To please them would we displease him? If so, we are not his followers, but theirs. No man can obey two masters. Solomon's building a heathen shrine to oblige a heathen wife was heathenism pure and simple, idolatry, root and branch. To neglect a duty, to compromise a principle, to pull down colors, to do a little wrong rather than be thought a religious prig, bigoted, or, at least, peculiar, is a great temptation; but then is the time for the uncompromising, "the everlasting No!" to ring from us, and firm loyalty to God to be seen without. Friendship that calls for

disloyalty to God needs destruction or reconstruction.

Doing and Discovering.

Obedience does not stop for mystery, but, going on, sees twilight brighten into day. How can wheat and corn become energy to think, and love, and work? Who can tell, but who can doubt? When we obey God's laws, it is as if an angel troubled the water, and instantly life and power emerge. Loyalty discovers. It is not merely the illumination, but the transfiguration of life; a brave departure, and then a discovery; "Westward-ho," and then a new world.

At the point of faith in Jesus Christ, a man becomes a new creature; it is another birth from above. It is inexplicable, but it is indubitable. The memorials on the table of the Lord are the simplest,—bread that perisheth, a cup that passeth; yet to the trusting heart, in the obedient hand, they become the food of the soul, the energy of divine life. The promise of the Father awaits our claiming. We take Him at His word, and the epoch of power dawns for a "Spirit-filled life." We know not how it is, but we know that it is. Let faith that trusts, and loyalty that obeys, stop at no mystery, but ever follow on to know the Lord, and we shall see that much which

is past finding out is not past following out; that a new earth of obedience will mean a new heaven of experience.

Why Complain?

There are, after all, but two explanations of human life,—Father and Fate, and there is only the difference of two letters there. All philosophies come in the day of trouble to this alternative. If there is no loving Father, why should we complain? We might as well save our breath. Let us be sensible. There is no use beating our sore heads against stone walls. "What are you going to do about it?" is a question the unbeliever may well ask himself. If you cannot be a Christian, be a Stoic; if you cannot live in Jerusalem, live in Sparta. To rebel is useless.

In our Father's school are many benches. This life is school-time. Whatever the word God writes on the top of your page,—Patience, Courage, Forgiveness, Resignation,—copy it over and over till He gives you another word. Never murmur. Do your best to solve your problems. If they are hard, try hard. If you are in the dark, say: "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." When you feel like complaining, listen. Be still before God. David said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." That is

better than moaning and lamenting; but let us leap from David to Jesus, and say, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "Father, glorify thy name." So shall we be made perfect through suffering, and the trial of our faith be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ in us now, and in the day of triumph by and by.

The Beatitude of Endurance.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." It is a verse of climbing power. It begins with man, it ends with God. It begins with earth, it ends with heaven. It begins with struggle, it ends with a crown.

Not, Blessed is the man who is never tempted. That would mean to be out of the world. The Lord wants us to be in the world, though not of it. Ignorance is not strength, innocence is not virtue.

Not, Blessed is the man who seeks temptation. "Lead us not into temptation." Unnecessary risk is fool-hardiness, not courage. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Enough tempting will come without our seeking it.

Not, Cursed is the man who is tempted. Temp-

tation cannot make us sinful. Our consent alone can. A note does not bind, until we endorse it. It is not feeling the temptation, but yielding, that is sinful.

Blessed is the man that endureth, stands up under it, resists, conquers. "Blessed," for it means new wisdom, new strength, new joy,— "the crown of life."

Common Days.

One of the chief dangers of life is trusting occasions. We think that conspicuous events, striking experiences, exalted moments have most to do with our character and capacity. We are wrong. Common days, monotonous hours, wearisome paths, plain old tools, and every-day clothes tell the real story. Good habits are not made on birthdays, nor Christian character at the new year. The vision may dawn, the dream may waken, the heart may leap with a new inspiration on some mountain-top, but the test, the triumph, is at the foot of the mountain, on the level plain.

The workshop of character is every-day life. The uneventful and commonplace hour is where the battle is won or lost. Thank God for a new truth, a beautiful idea, a glowing experience; but remember that unless we bring it down to the ground and teach it to walk with feet, work

with hands, and stand the strain of daily life, we have worse than lost it, we have been hurt by it. A new light in our heart makes an occasion; but an occasion is an opportunity, not for building a tabernacle and feeling thankful and looking back to a blessed memory, but for shedding the new light on the old path, and doing old duties with new inspiration. The uncommon life is the child of the common day, lived in an uncommon way.

Success.

Salvation is the only real success. Men are called successful who succeed in a section or two. What if three air-tight compartments keep dry, when the bulkheads break and the ship sinks? What if a man wins a boat race, a horse race, a lottery prize, and cannot speak grammatically, and does not know one good book nor one star nor tune nor flower from another, nor ever had a real friend? Is that success?

Salvation is soundness. To have a splendid digestion, but a feeble mind; to have muscles standing out like whip-cords, but lungs that are affected; to have perfect sight and hearing, but a weak heart, is this success? Is this soundness? Salvation is health, wholeness, holiness. It is to be right all round. I may miss perfect success in the world of business and in the world of health;

I need not in the real world—the moral,—in the real life—the spiritual. God's holiness is expressed in his love. Therefore love is wholeness, and to love is to fulfil—to fill full—God's law, and be right all round. Learn then to love God and your brother and all things great and small. Life is our "chance of learning love." To make money, to win academic degrees, to lead political armies, and not to love up and down, right and left, is to have missed success. Men suspect it now. They will know it by and by.

Blessedness of Eternal Service.

How much we have to thank our Saviour for, in what he told us about our future life! We often wonder that he did not say more. But the words, "If it were not so, I would have told you," are a sufficient answer to any feeling of insufficiency. Whenever our minds range up and down the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," we may find comfort of the most substantial order. In the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" we discover that character and capacity—what we are and what we can do—are coins that ring true on both counters, are characteristics of the eternal life, which is ours to live in all the worlds. Let busy men and women

who sometimes recoil from those descriptions of heaven in books and poems and sermons that dwell too exclusively on psalms and harps and music and rest and peace, rejoice that the teachings of Jesus are so full of service and activity. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is the enfranchisement and ennoblement of labor. How often from the lips of Jesus fall the words, "husbandman," "vineyard," "laborer," "master," "servant," "ruler," "talents," "pounds," "steward," "interest," "wages"! However lonely and obscure and seemingly unimportant our life-work may be, let us remember that it is only our novitiate, our apprenticeship, and that to be good and faithful in a few things, even in that which is least,—is to make as good a beginning as God asks of any one, and will be as certain of recognition in the day of account as though we were kings or princes.

Battlement-Building.

"Prophylaxis" may be a technical term, but it stands for practical truth. To guard against perils is better than subsequent attempts at remedy or consequent pains of remorse. God told his people of old that when they built their flat-roofed houses, on which many an hour would be spent, they must build a battlement. If they

did not, and any one fell off, his blood would be on the owner's head.

Ought we not to put guards at points of peril in our lives,—not for others alone, but for our own exceptional moments? We are not always at our best. We are not always safe where ordinarily we move without peril. Every deepened conviction, every outward commitment, every vow and pledge and new act of consecration is putting a guard at the point of possible personal danger. Should we not learn the lesson, too, in our city life, that railings are better than ambulances, and building parapets than setting bones? Looking for the springs of evil is a better investment of time than groaning at the muddy mouth of the river; and preventing the sowing of seeds of sin, than taking care of harvests of shame. How much better to guard lives with new hopes and opportunities, new interests and outlooks, to fortify them in advance against danger, than to attempt the restoration and reformation of lives that have suffered remediless!

And who shall dare refuse, though he be strong and steady, to build battlements at dangerous edges of his life, lest a weaker brother may fall where he stood safe? Can any pleasure of "uncharted freedom," any pride of personal self-indulgence, justify the moral catastrophe

which our self-confidence may provoke, our example encourage? Better any barrier of loving self-denial than another's blood through our loveless self-assertion. Let the brotherhood of Jesus Christ remember the weak brother, and interpret Christian liberty in the light of Christian love.

A Lesson from Peter the Rock.

Thousands of pages have been written on Christ's words to Peter: "On this rock I will build my church." May not Peter's own writings about the "Living Rock," the "sure foundation," throw some light on the meaning? Peter says nothing of himself as being more than any other Christian. Quite humbly he refers to the word, "stone of stumbling" which Jesus used so sharply on that memorable day, but writing to Christians he says: "To whom coming as to a living stone, ye also as living stones are built." Was not Peter the first stone on the foundation, upon whom the next living stones rested? Was not Peter the one who led thousands to Christ on the day of Pentecost, the first to open the door of faith to the Gentiles? Let us not deny him this primacy. But let us learn this from him: that we, who through some Christian have learned of Christ, must so live that another can learn Christ

through us, — that we, who have rested the weight of our faith and hope on the testimony and life of another and so have been built upon the true foundation, must ourselves be living stones, able to win the confidence and support of some one else. Each living stone that is built upon another must in its turn become the foundation for another. Supported myself by another, I must myself support another.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."

Every stone in a growing temple stands in this double relation, — laid on the course below in trust, and bearing up in trustworthiness the course above it.

Steadfastness.

The business of a river is to flow. Its banks may be beautiful or unpleasing; its current strong or sluggish; its skies blue or clouded; its waters may mirror flowers in spring and ferns in summer; may float the dead leaves of fall, or be hemmed in and pressed by the ice in winter—

it must flow on. A noisy brook in its youth, a noble river at last, so deep that men say, "There go the ships," majestically entering the ocean; but from its birth to its bourne its business is to flow. Here eddies may seem to be turning it back, there the current may be checked by a resisting arm of land, but the central stream moves steadily onward as though led by the hand of destiny.

Is not this steadfastness to mark, to make, the character of your lives? Is it not God's will that we should press steadily on to our goal in obedience to Him, in channels of his choosing, whether in sunshine or shadow, in the cheer of spring or in the chill of winter, neither detained by pleasure nor deterred by pain?

The hosannas of the children rang about Jesus and gladdened his heart, the palm branches were strewn in his path and gave him joy, but he would not build a tabernacle of the branches, good as it was to be there. The agony of Gethsemane confronted Jesus, but it could not turn his steadfast face.

His life moved unfalteringly onward, neither beguiled by pleasures nor daunted by perils. He felt both, but would not let them determine anything for him. They must be incidental; to please his Father was fundamental. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his lord."

Remember, then, amid the joys of life, the glad but steadfast face of our Master, and amid the sorrows of life, the sad but steadfast face of our Lord. How strong, how peaceful, how deeply joyful our lives may be, if they are sacramental, lived in memory of Jesus, the central stream of their deep determination, like his—doing the will of our Father.

The Try-Square.

Most religions are meant to be straight lines, connecting two points—God and man. If man can be right with God, if he can please and pacify Him, all will be well. But Christianity has three points—God and man and his brother, with two lines that make a right angle. Each one of us is at the point of the angle, looking up to God and out to our brother. What God sends down the perpendicular line we must pass on along the horizontal. If one hand goes up to God, the other must go out to our brother.

That was the way Jesus stood, the Son of God and the Brother of men. What God gave him, he gave us. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." So He expects us to do. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Let us, then, live as our Master lived and bids

us live, giving our hearts to God, our hands to men. Even when I am alone in prayer, Jesus bids me say, "Our Father," remembering my brother. If God send me riches, I must bless my brothers; if poverty, I must set an example of rich faith. If He sends me health, I must divide my strength with others; if sickness, my patience must be a signal for God. If I am tempted, I must look both ways, and consider my brother as well as my God. If I only looked to God, I might spend more money on myself, and drink wine and ride my bicycle Sunday afternoon, for in themselves these things may not be sinful; but when I look at my brothers, some poor, some weak, some worldly, I hesitate. The law of liberty would let me as I look up, but not the law of love as I look out.

Let us put this try-square on our lives and look both ways, doing that only which is both filial and fraternal. Then men who see our good works will look to see where the light comes from that blesses and brightens them, and through us they will learn to glorify God.

Loyalty, Not Feeling.

God accepts obedience without emotion, but cannot accept emotion without obedience. To advise generosity and be selfish, to praise heroism

and be a coward, to say, "Lord, Lord," and not do the things the Lord says,—this is self-deception and self-destruction. Obedience God will have, and there is no substitute for it. So essential is it to life, so important is it in all physical, intellectual, and spiritual development, that God is willing to wait for grace and beauty, the high color of feeling, the glow of enthusiasm, if he gets plain obedience. He is not afraid for the flower, if he can get the root. Even knowledge, the appreciation of what the commandments are, He is not jealous over, if only we will do our best to keep his commandments as far as we do understand them. He knows that light comes through doing, not through dreaming; that the best way to understand his will is not to try to understand it, but to try to do it. So it is a thousand times better to do God's will without knowing it than to know it without doing it. It is right to say, "I wish I knew God's will more perfectly." It is better to pray, "O God, help me to do thy will, as I know it, more perfectly than ever."

"When saw we thee and fed and clothed and comforted thee?" cried the astonished ones on the right of the judge. They did not realize what they had been doing, but they had done the will of God. Whatever they on the left may have thought or known or hoped or planned, they did not do the will of God. God classified them

on this basis. "By thy fruits ye shall be known."

We must put the emphasis of living where God will make his tests of life. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Interest yourself in the interesting, be entertained by the entertaining, be absorbed in the absorbing, but do not forget for one day that study, business, pains, pleasures, are only incidental. Loyalty to God is alone fundamental. Feelings, words, deeds, must be beads strung on the string of duty. Let the world tell you in a hundred ways what your life is for. Say you ever and only, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." Out of that dutiful root grows the beautiful life, the life radically and radiantly true to God,—the only life that can be lived in both worlds.

Encouragement.

Nowhere is the tenderness of the friendship of Jesus to be seen more beautifully and affectingly than in the words uttered in the upper room, which Luke records in chapter xxii., 28–32. The disciples must have been ashamed when their Lord discovered them still disputing who should be first, who should be greatest. Could they help being rebuked, when he took the place of the missing servant and did the lowly office no

one of them—aspirants for greatness—would humble his pride or risk his official chance by doing? How easily and naturally must depression and discouragement have come on them! How far away from him they must have felt themselves! What had they amounted to, or what were their hopes worth?

See how Jesus treats them. Three ways he encourages them, touching their past, their future, and their present. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation," the ones who have stood by me. You have been my friends in the day of small things. I do not forget it, and will not. Then he looks forward. "I appoint you a kingdom." Do not get things in false proportion. The real kingdom is there. This life is apprenticeship. This is drill, training, testing. Things are not rewards, but tools. Stand by me faithfully in temptation, be faithful in that which is least, and I will reward you with heavenly appointments that will make you forget any earthly disappointments. "I appoint you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me a kingdom."

Thus, having looked backward and recognized what they had been to him, and looked forward and told them what they had to hope for, He looks about and tells them that, though they are to be terribly tested, He is praying for them.

Who shall say what that encouragement did for them? Their faith was shaken, but not broken. They were shattered by their enemy's attacks, shattered and scattered, but the day came when they had learned the weakness of self and the strength of their Lord. Then the day of small things passed on to the day of things great, heroic things done and borne for Christ. Strife for places gave way to zeal for usefulness, and they who once forsook their master and fled now counted it all joy to suffer for his name's sake, and counted not their lives dear unto themselves if they could help the kingdom to come. Was the encouragement of Jesus lost upon these men?

A Verse for the New Year.

Phil. 4 : 6.—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." "Careful" means full of unnecessary care —crossing rivers before we reach them, dreading troubles that never come, expecting evil of the Lord instead of good; in a word—worrying.

Do not worry is a hard word, but it is a plain command. The anxious Christian hurts more than himself; he hurts the faith of those who know him and the good name of his Lord who has promised to supply all his needs.

Go deeper into the text: "*But in everything* by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." That means there is nothing we cannot pray about. Why do we not believe it and act upon it?

What we can take to God we can trust to God. What we put our fidelity into, He will perfect by his faithfulness. While we work for the best, He works the best for us. We may not succeed as we hoped; we may have discipline we little expected, but the Father knows what his child needs.

What God has for us to do we can do, or to bear we can bear. When He says "My grace is sufficient for thee," dare we doubt it? Is there not enough in his ocean to fill our pitcher? With the need of every day will come his promised supply.

And do not forget the words, "with thanksgiving." Be on the lookout for mercies. The more we look for them the more of them will we see. Blessings brighten when we count them. Out of the determination of the heart the eyes see. If you want to be gloomy, there's gloom enough to keep you glum; if you want to be glad, there's gleam enough to keep you glad. Say "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Better lose count in enumerating your blessings than lose your blessings in telling

over your troubles. "Be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting."

Unbraid the verse into three cords and bind yourself to God with them in trustful, prayerful, thankful bonds,—Anxious for nothing, Prayerful for everything, Thankful for anything—"and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Our Business in the World.

One of the first questions we ask when we confront a new and strange piece of machinery is, "What is it for?" It is a child's constant question. The soundest common sense is in it, the surest proof of a sound natural philosophy. We believe without being told that there is a purpose back of everything. Nothing happens. Even accidents betray a purpose to prove the value of the laws that have been broken. It is a fateful moment when the habit of asking "why?" has brought the question to us about ourself—What am I for? One thing is clear on general principles—all things ideally, and therefore intentionally, are for the best possible uses. A knife is not meant to be a baby's plaything, nor a watch to prop up the leg of an uneven table. Perhaps in some swift emergency a lower than the highest

use can be made of something, but not for long, without doing violence to reason.

Tell me that my business in life is to eat, and drink and be merry, and I admit at once that it is true at times, but not all the time. Nothing can so perfectly eat, drink and be merry, as a kitten, but to say that that exhausts the possibilities of a man, or even of a little child, is to say what we do not believe. Hundreds of things are included in my life. They have their place, and a claim not to be denied, but when I am told that they are what I am for, I know better. They are to be subjected, to be put under me. They are subsidiary and must subserve the supreme interest of my life. And what is that? To find pleasure and to avoid pain? That cannot be, unless life is to be called a failure, for every life misses some pleasures and meets some pain.

If success in life means all sunshine, then failure is the lot of everybody. But there is something higher than pleasure and pain, than sunshine and storm, to which these are only incidental, and that is doing God's will. That is supreme. That touches everything in life and makes the best of it, and in making the best of things makes the best of us. That is what we are for, to glorify God—to make him glorious in the doing of his will in every relation of life.

"Life," says de Tocqueville, "is not pleasure

nor pain, but an earnest business with which we are entrusted, which we are to carry on and to carry out with honor." "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God," is an utterance of the soul that gives life at once the highest unity and consistency, power and joy, peace and fruitfulness. The smallest task feels its dignity, the noblest calling becomes the more ennobled. The trying and disagreeable and wearisome things are seen in a new light and borne with a high hope. It is like work on a splendid building. Digging and carting, cutting and trimming, stone and mortar and scaffolding, all belong to a great purpose and push its fulfilment.

The will of God! To do my share of it—where I live, with my tools, with my opportunities, with my enlargement or limitations—that is what I am for. It is a life of self-surrender, as I look up,—of constant trust in my Father's love, of the growing intimacy of a devoted child, of the longing to know him better and please him more perfectly. It is a life of self-mastery, as I look in,—of steady determination to keep my senses under the rule of my spirit, to bring every thought even into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ; and a life of self-development in the training of every power. It is the enlarging and enriching of every faculty; the enlightening and ennobling of tastes and sympa-

thies. It is a life of self-devotion, of putting my best self at the point of need, striving in all sacred and sacrificial uses of life to bless the world, to uplift and redeem, and fill up in my body that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ.

Let a man try to live with no sky, no God in his thoughts, no aspiration, nor adoration, nor awe of soul; let him throw the reins on the back of his body, and let the senses do as they please; let him live for himself alone and stay unmoved in bed with his children when his neighbor lacks bread, or warm in his purple and luxuriating at his feast when Lazarus lies cold and hungry at his gate, and is there any one who will doubt, long before the end of things, that that is not what a man is for?

To do the will of God—that is the chief end and glory of man. No other aim can stand in the test of time, to say nothing of eternity. No other aim can bring every note in the gamut of our being into play and make a genuine psalm of life. No other can take every fragment of our being, every word and deed, every thought and longing, every task and trial, every test and sorrow, and fit it into a mosaic whose pattern is the one shown on the mount, whose clear image is the predestined likeness of Jesus Christ.

The Father of Lights.

Every bad thing and every demoralizing thing is from below, and cometh up from the heart of self-will, where there is all restlessness and inconstancy; but "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

What the sun in the heavens is to the earth, that the Father is to us. Was there ever an act of unenlightened worship more dignified and exalted than his who, from his silent hilltop, watched the flushing east, and bowed before the great day-bringing, life-giving sun? How fine, how true the Apostle's comparison! What light that brightens a human face or lightens a page or a pathway but springs from the sun? The blaze of a pine knot, the shining lamp, the glowing of coals or their reduction and refinement in jets of light, all are only the release of imprisoned sunshine. The gentle beauty of the rainbow, the blue of sky and sea, the endless joy of the flowers, the witchery of spring, the luxury of summer, the wealth of autumn, the flashing splendor of a snowy field, all bless the sun for their being.

Now past the figure of speech, we have reached the glorious matter of fact: that God is the true Father of Lights; the Author of every good and

perfect gift. But pride awakens and airs itself on the city walls, saying: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built? Should I thank God for the health and wealth, the education, the social position, the political influence, which by my care and skill, by my judgment and perseverance and pluck I possess to-day? Why should I not put the crown on my own head when I dug the gold and cut and fitted the jewels? It is mine."

Steady, brother; listen: A voice is sounding across the years and over the graves of a hundred generations. "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God . . . and say in thine heart, 'My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.' But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth."

All any of us amounts to is the interest on entrusted capital. Who could wish otherwise? If we owed everything to ourselves, no one could live with us. Dependence upon God means association with God, and that is life's supreme opportunity and noblest hope. Every gift is from above to take our thoughts and thanks above. God's gifts are to lift up our faces to His, to awaken us to love Him. Every bad and imperfect thing drags us down to darkness; every good and perfect gift woos us into the light. The

birds and flowers are His appeal to trust; the stately order of the heavens, to symmetry and steadiness; the beauty of nature, to the beauty of holiness; the affections of earth, to the perfect love of which they are but dear fragments. And God be thanked for his supreme appeal—that good and perfect gift, the gift unspeakable: His life, His love, His very self in Jesus Christ.

But a heart cries out in the darkness: "God's gifts have been anything but good and perfect to me. He has instead robbed me of health and hopes and loved ones. Faith is a mockery, and providence a fool's dream." Steady, brother. Look at the text again: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Wonderful words! The apostle James might have studied astronomy to-day. The word for "variableness" is parallax, and that means a difference due to a change in the point of view. "But that is just what I mean," you say; "God has changed toward me. See how He treated me once; see my happy young days, my glorious buds and blossoms, and now see my luxuriance cut away, my exuberance gone; my branches bleeding from his knife." Wait and see, and trust while you wait. God's love is immutable.

Every gift of God is a perfecting gift. The

plow and the harrow and the pruning-knife are as much his gifts as the sun and the rain. Grapes are better than luxuriant leaves and a tangle of twiners. Character is worth all it costs, and since God is ceaselessly, changelessly bent upon character, the denial or trial that helps bring it is as much a tool of his invariable purpose as the gift that makes you laugh for joy.

The shadow on your life came not from his turning, but from yours. Is night the turning away of the sun? No; night is the shadow cast by the turning away of our little earth from its great bright sun. And what is winter but the tipping away of our Northland from the sun, till we shiver in slant, scant rays? The sun does not bank his fires nor grudge his radiance in December. Our bent is the trouble. When we turn again, our springtime comes with the singing of birds and the leap of life. Turn back. With your face toward the Father of Lights, all shadows fall behind you.

In the light that streams from the face of Christ—God's human face—your sorrows shall be seen as lessons in God's school, your discipline as discipling, your cutting back as the husbandman's hope of more fruit and better. God has never changed his mind of love toward you, and never a shadow falls because He has turned his face away. Every good gift and every perfecting gift

is from above. Some day the gold will be thankful for the crucible, the steel for the furnace of pain, the purple clusters for the knife that cuts. Child of God, say "Thank you" now to your Father for all the bitter and the sweet; now, when it means something; now, by a heroic faith that trusts his perfecting love, and the day will come when you will bless Him for every gift that lifted you up from littleness and selfishness and sin, to a life like his, large, loving, sympathizing, good and true—beautiful with his beauty, and joyful with his joy.

The Carpenter's Son.

"Is not this the carpenter?" As though no words of wisdom or works of power could come from a carpenter! If Jesus had been a rabbi, in a scholar's robe, it would have been another thing. Yes; and what another thing for us, and for all the world's workers! Celsus sneered at the carpenter, and said that word proved he was an impostor. How could God so demean himself? But the world has left Celsus behind, along with the critics of Nazareth, and blesses God for the gentleness and comfort, the sympathy and hope, which were given to us by the hands of the carpenter.

It suits our best sense that the one who spoke

of "putting the hand to the plow," and "taking the yoke upon us," should have made plows and yokes himself, and people do not think his words less heavenly for not smelling of books and lamps. Let us not make the mistake of those Nazarenes. That Jesus was a carpenter, was to them poor credentials of divinity, but it has been divine credentials to the poor ever since. Let us not be deceived by social ratings and badges of the schools. Hundreds of doors are not to be opened by Phi Beta Kappa keys.

Carey was a cobbler, but he had a map of the world on his shop wall, and outdid Alexander the Great in dreaming and doing. Many a tinker and weaver and stonecutter and hand worker has had open windows and a sky and a mind with wings. What thoughts were in the mind of Jesus at his work-bench? One of them was that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of God—at any cost! Let us go into the carpenter's shop and learn some lessons:

1. *The dignity of toil.*—The Architect of the universe, by whom all things were created, when for love's sake he became a man, made plows and yokes. The loftiest soul did lowliest work. Hard hands belonged to the gentlest heart. The Son of God would not have an exceptional lot, but a common one. He must know how most men feel, and so he became a wage-earner and a

day-laborer. Now let all men know that work, the duty of Eden, the condition of health, the law of progress, the salt of manhood, the safeguard of virtue, bears forever the sign manual of God. Now let all men feel the disgrace of idleness, and hail the infinite dignity of the words that came from the heart of the Creator, and the lips of the Carpenter: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

2. *Divine sympathy in toil.*—What this means to men, may mean to us, is beyond words. "What does the unseen Framer of the world know or care about my daily tasks?" Dare you look the Carpenter of Nazareth in the face and say that again? The words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," bring to us immediately the assurance of the divine sympathy. Of course, the Omniscient knows everything, but now we know that He knows with a new certainty and nearness. See the lack-lustre eye of the worker who knows not the love of God as Christ revealed it. Now see him after he has known Christ. He is resting at noon in his shop, reading the words Mark 6:3: "Is not this the carpenter?"

"Yes, yes, a carpenter, same trade as mine.
It warms my heart as I read that line.
I can stand the hard work, I can stand the poor pay,
For I'll see that Carpenter at no distant day."

How like the Lord are the words of the "Logia," lately found in Egypt: "Lift the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I!" Lift up your head, lift up your heart, toiler of the common day, your Saviour has drunk the cup you are drinking. He knows how it tastes. Let the thought of his loving sympathy stir your heart to new hope and love and loyalty.

A friend of Cardinal Manning reports these words of his: "I was going down that street once," pointing to a row of houses, just finished, "and I met a boy in plain dress, with a pale, but lovely, thoughtful face, and I stopped him for the pleasure of speaking to him. 'Well, my little man, where are you going with your bundle?' He said, 'There,' pointing to one of the houses being built, 'to my father.' 'What is your father?' I asked. 'A carpenter, sir.'" "Then," the cardinal added slowly, "I was awed and startled. I had met a carpenter's son! My Lord was once a little servant like that boy. Oh," he said, with swimming eyes, "what depths of love were in Christ!"

3. *The discipline of toil.*—But the end of sympathy and comfort is one with the end of toil itself, our character and capacity. One of this life's capital truths is that the worker is more than the work. The work accomplished is less

than the accomplished worker. The workshop was part of the schooling of Jesus. Those eighteen years were bounden days of apprenticeship. The Master himself had to be a disciple and learn by heart what he should one day teach. He knew what monotony meant, and fidelity without applause; the sight of the trader's wealth and the rabbi's recognition, the patience of the plow and the constraint of the yoke. How hard it must have been to work and wait in obscurity all those years after the vision that came to him, when he went up to the temple and viewed the world from the portals of his Father's house. Nazareth must have been dull enough after the brilliant city of the great King.

Is the disciple above his master? Shall we count it a "strange thing" if we have to know "discipling" in weary days of unrecognized faithfulness among uncongenial surroundings, the task so dull, the hope so remote, the heart so tired of the low and little, so hungry for the lofty and glorious? Be patient. Life is not wages, but worth; not what we have, but what we are. Present tests are for future trusts. If we cannot be depended on in that which is least, how dare we dream about great commissions? If we are faithless and worthless in the shop, can we expect an opening heaven and the words, "This is my beloved child"? If we flinched from the plow

and the yoke, what would become of us if we faced a cross? Let us steady ourselves, then, to be and do our best just now and here, and leave all thoughts of wages and promotion and honors with God. "Be thou faithful," is the word for us to-day. To-morrow is God's and its glorious hope of "the crown of life."

Written on Shipboard, February, 1901.

There is a certain border-land in which we must live no small part of our time. It is not the country of compromise, but of give and take. We are bound by deep conscientiousness to be truthful, but that does not mean brutally truthful. Truth need not be a ragged edge of rock, but, while profoundly structural, it can be grass-grown and fragrant through gentle arts of cultivation. We are bound to be polite and self-sacrificing, but bound also to let others deny themselves for us. We are bound to give, but no less to receive. We may have a right to be annoyed, but we need not wholly live up to it. We may be obliged to reprove, but we can instantly plan some scheme of kindness. Life demands a firm hand, but there is no law against wearing a velvet glove.

Thy will be done means more than thy will be borne. No matter what sorrow invades our life, we are still to do God's will. We shall see afterwards that the sorrow rightly accepted fitted us to do some new duty, or to do our old duty more effectively. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the right cry in the hour of bewildering grief. "What wilt thou have me to learn and do?" It is not how we like our new lesson, but how we learn it that is of highest importance, not how we feel at the loss of an old tool, but can we make more faithful and fruitful use of the tools that are left. Life can never be the same, we say, but it ought not to be, and what it costs to make it better we can well afford to pay. Instead, then, of a resignation, which passionately or passively, defiantly or despairingly, lets go the prized possession, let there be the heroism of renunciation which says, "Now that I know God's will, *I lay this down of myself*, to live a better life —more blessed and more blessing *without* it, than I could have lived with it." How certainly will the future justify such faith, and a braver bearing of God's will lead to a better doing of God's will.

There is nothing possible to a human soul greater than simple faithfulness. And the word faithful stands out as the hopeful, possible thing

about our lives. Faithful—faith in God, fidelity to God—it means both. Faithful to-day, faithful to-morrow, will mean faithful unto death —and that will mean "a crown of life."

Jesus is not the door into a little life. He leads us into the largest, fullest life. The Christian sees the King in his beauty in the land of the far distances. And what is our life for, but to make it sacred to Jesus, a life like his, laid down for the good of men? To live for ourselves is to die. To make life an end in itself is to end life; to love your life is to lose it. But lose your life, and you save it; lay it down all at once, if God should so will, or a little at a time every day, for Jesus's sake and the Gospel's, and you will find it lifted up in power to draw men to Jesus.

Many of God's angels come to us in veiled blackness; often his choicest messengers meet us thus. The angels in black are coming to you from way off over the plain—nearer and nearer they come, up to the very door of the tent—welcome them courteously—receive them not unwillingly, not inhospitably, for so you receive the God of peace. So meet his veiled angels, that you can take the gift they bring,—a new

sense of God, the Father Almighty—and travel the rest of the pilgrimage with Him whom your soul has learned to know as its lover, and whom you bless because He afflicted you.

This is the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free—when He gives us the inspiration, the desire, and the power to choose God's will; to say with Paul, "The love of Christ constrains me to live no longer for myself, but for Him who died for me; though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all;" to say with Jesus, "I lay down my life of myself." This is divine freedom, to choose of our own accord, and by the spirit's enabling the life of loving service.

Goodness outranks goods. A bursting barn and a godless heart proclaim a fool without hope. Life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, and a soul outweighs the world. So character must come before comforts, and God before bread. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all *these things* shall be added unto you."

Christian possession means stewardship. Admission to God's loving favor means commission

to divide it with others. To be obliged to God for his goodness, means that we are obliged to be good to those about us. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." What does that mean, but that, as Jesus revealed God to us, so must we reveal Him to others.

No one can do anything to-morrow. If I live until to-morrow and do anything, it will have been done to-day; then, if it is right, do it to-day. To-morrow may not come. Fly your flag to-day for Jesus Christ, if you have given yourself to Him. You will be stronger to fight a good fight and keep the faith to-morrow, if to-morrow ever becomes to-day.

How it would revolutionize life if we could agree to have one day a year for murmuring and complaining, for letting out the floods of pent-up annoyances and grudges and slights, and be thankful the rest of the time! How much better than to try to be thankful one day by law and grumble by impulse for three hundred and sixty-four! Let to-day sound a thankful note to ring through the year.

The true way to increase any Christlike trait of character is to deliberately and tirelessly prac-

tice it. Like a muscle, it grows by stress and strain. Practice patience and cheerfulness, for example, regularly, and they will grow stronger, whether you enjoy the exercise or not.

God has promised to satisfy—but He did not promise *when*. God has time enough, and so have you. God has boundless resources, and His resources are yours. Can you not trust him? Trust and wait. He knows what is best for you, He has reasons for denying you now, but in the end He will satisfy.

It is not wrong for a shadowed heart to prompt sunny words. Even a cat will curl up in the only spot of sunshine in the room. If our life is clouded and the clouds have a silver lining, let us wear our clouds wrong side out, or bright side out.

Life is what we are alive to. It is not length, but breadth. To be alive only to appetite, pleasure, pride, money-making, and not to goodness and kindness, purity and love, history, poetry, music, flowers, stars, God and eternal hopes, it is to be all but dead.

Look out for the beginnings of sin. The thin edge of the wedge always comes first, and, like

the camel's nose, seems insignificant, but it is not insignificant. Now is our time to resist. A little later, and we have lost our chance. Resist beginnings.

The deeper men go into life, the deeper is their conviction that this life is not all. It is an "unfinished symphony." A day may round out an insect's life, and a bird or a beast needs no to-morrow. Not so with him who knows that he is related to God and has felt "the power of an endless life."

The kindness of Christmas is the kindness of Christ. To know that God so loved us as to give us his Son for our dearest Brother, has brought human affection to its highest tide on the day of that Brother's birth. If God so loved us, how can we help loving one another?

There is no better way to show our trust than to busy ourselves with the things He asks us to do. Trusting Him to take care of his share leaves us, "at leisure from ourselves" to do our share of the "Father's business."

We must live as the Saviour did; his sorrows he divided with his Father—his life with the world.

The business of life is to be moving God-wards, happy or unhappy. Yet happiness is most likely to come to those who are so moving.

Do not let the good things of life rob you of the best things.

Mystery is God's allurement along the path of knowledge; it is his challenge to a human soul.

Decide what it is your duty to do, do it, and never regret anything that comes in its train.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,"—too small to be worth talking about, for the day of adversity is its first real opportunity.

Christianity is not an invention, but a discovery. Its central message is the life and love of God revealed, unveiled, in Christ.

If men cannot believe in the Christians whom they have seen, why should they believe in Christ whom they have not seen?

Evening meditation is less important than morning preparation. "Well begun is half done."

Life is correspondence to an infinite environment, touching God and true to God at every point of feeling, thinking, willing, loving.

"Try it any way" is a good motto. There is a chance that you might succeed. Even if you do not, you will be no worse off than before. Faint-hearted refusal is the worst kind of failure.

No lot in life is small enough to stunt a soul. Lowly circumstances are no bar to high thoughts.

The Christian who lives by the power of Christ's indwelling Spirit, becomes a "demonstration of the Spirit in power," a visible and indubitable proof of what God can do in a human life.

With your God-given will you may dispose yourself in opposition to your disposition.

If we show the Lord's death at Communion, we must show the Lord's life in the world. If it is a Eucharist on Sunday, it must prove on Monday that it was also a Sacrament.

May the tasks of my life be accepted as tests of my fidelity and accomplished for Thy glory, and the smallest duties be done well to give Thee pleasure.

There are no mile posts among the stars. Light and space quite sweep away our little measurements. So some day will our years be caught up in the Eternity to which we belong. How glorious to be forever the Lord's !

To be happy is after all but an incident. To be good and to do good, to know God and to serve him, are the important things.

We shall be glad—really glad—of everything that has come to us, no matter if it is sorrow or pain, when we find that our experience fits some one else's need—that some one else can build on our lives.

We are here to represent Christ—to present him again, to re-present him.

Take care that your profession does not outrun your possession. Artificiality and hypocrisy tear character to shreds eventually.

Salvation is going to Jesus for what he can give us—adoption, forgiveness, strength—and then going into the world with what he gives, to live his life and do his work.

If you *do* fall, if you *are* overcome, He is faithful and just to forgive, and to cleanse *every day* from all unrighteousness.

The man who never makes any mistakes never makes anything. Many chips, broken instruments, cuts and bruises, belong to the history of any beautiful statue. Persist in spite of everything.

Prayer is a breath of fresh air—much else, of course, but certainly this. It is inspiration on a hill-top for new toiling on the plain.

When I want to speak let me think first, Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? If not, let it be left unsaid.

How can we redeem society if we do not everywhere put ourselves on the constructive side of moral questions? If all people did as we do

in politics, amusements, temperance, Sabbath-observance, would the day be won for God or lost?

Look out for choices. They run into habit, character, destiny.

Death is only the shadow on the river of this life, where it meets the great sea of eternal life.

We have no outside, distant, occasional Saviour, as the disciples had long ago; but his Spirit, his other self, to abide with us, in us, to-day, to-morrow, forever.

For what of the ape and tiger there is in man he is not responsible, but for petting and pampering it when he should be chaining and starving it.

We are like children learning to walk. We fall again and again. Sometimes we cry out; sometimes we look up and try to smile; but we do get up again and try to go on.

Accidents are consequences. Cause and effect are mother and child. Hands, human or divine, are back of coincidences.

Size is not strength. Reputation is not character. Outward success is not God's gauge.

God holds you responsible for your nature plus your nurture, for yourself plus your possibilities.

The late breakfast, the morning paper that did not come, the rainy day, the contradiction, the snub, the slight—these are the termites that eat out our character, the little foxes that spoil the grapes.

If God made no response except to perfect faith, who could hope for help? He is the God of sprouting seeds, and little vital beginnings.

God's love is not rounded out until I respond to it.

When you can't have your own way, don't pose as a martyr at the stake, earning a halo.

Individual transformation, rather than social conformation, sounds the note of advance.

What have you done to-day that nobody but a Christian would do?

Disappointment feeds development in earnest souls.

Live with the light of God's love shining into your *common* day. Take old gifts and joys continued as though they were fresh gifts. So we can sing a *new* song unto the Lord every day.

Temperament is wax before the human will and God. Natural traits are powerless before moral decisions.

PRAYERS

PRAYERS

At Communion Service.

Let us so live to-morrow, that we and others may be conscious where we have lingered to-day. We come to Thee, thy sorrowing, sinning, defeated, careless, struggling, but ever-returning children. May these signs signify not so much thy love as our response to that love. We keep this feast "till he come;" then it, too, shall fade back into the memories of earth because of the marriage-supper of the Lamb. We accept thine invitation, Lord,—unworthy enough, but not unworthily, because in obedience to thy command and in love to Thee. If to-morrow our plans are broken, may we be patient, and, thinking of that Broken Life, may we offer the parts of our broken plans as a sacrament, a sacred thing, to Thee. Holy Spirit, take of the things of Christ, and show them to us, and show them through us, that the world may know Thee.

On Christmas Day.

We see Jesus in the manger. We adore him; we worship him; we glorify him. We stand oppressed before such love—a love stronger than

death—a love so strong that it did die that we might live. We thank Thee for the sweetness of human love, but how could we ever have dared to think that such love was in the heart of God for us! We look on nature and see thy beauty and thy majesty, but we are afraid, for we have sinned. And then we learn that thou hast sent thy Son, to be bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh; and before such inconceivable love we can only worship and adore. We are so weary of our failures and our slow growth toward Thee. Cleanse us deeply from sin, strengthen our moral purposes.

On Easter Day.

At Christmas time we looked on the face of the Babe, and wondered with the shepherds and adored with the angels; we have followed him through the years as he went in and out of his mother's house; we do not know when the consciousness of his real Father came to him, but we have seen him thrilling under it; we have traced him through his years of ministry; we have sorrowed with him in Gethsemane; we have stood before his Cross, but there our sympathy failed, when, oh wonder of wonders, we found that we had died with him and risen again! Death hath no more dominion over us. We are sons and daughters of the Resurrection.

On Thanksgiving Day.

Thou art better to the worst of us than the best of us deserve. Help us to realize how good a thing it is to bear pain and weariness for Thee —like a keen knife sharpened down to the handle. Teach us to be fair, fair in the distribution of what is, after all, not our own. May our faith get into our hands and feet, into our tongues and tempers, so that the world may see how warm is our solicitude for thy good name. May the man who is deliberately doing wrong have our pity and rebuke and, if it may be, our sympathy and help. May we pass in well-used tools, that we may know how to use the new set when we get them—our own, and as well fitted to their use as were these we lay aside. May we be stern, stringent, remorseless, toward our own sins and wrong-doings. Show us where the evil in us is, where the wild beasts of passion lurk. May we set our faces steadfastly to go to our Jerusalem. May we have an abundant entrance on that great Thanksgiving Day. We thank Thee for past mercies and present blessings and future hopes, so bright, so winsome, so dazzling. And they are sure to come true. By thy forgiveness we hope to live lives needing less forgiveness—lives that shall ring with victory. May we give ourselves to Thee in a consecration so complete that we shall

be fitted for the rest of our lives here and for the never-ending eons of our true life there. Bless every one who is doing even one self-sacrificing piece of work for Thee. Win to Thyself from our glad and spontaneous hearts new recognition of thy goodness, for Thou art good.

After the Offering.

It was Thy gift to us—we give it back to Thee. May those who receive it be blessed by it and use it wisely. We who give it are blessed, for it is more blessed to give than to receive. May the men who distribute this money to those who know the bitterness of being compelled to receive, be men of nicest feeling and tenderest tact. May rich and poor meet together. May the Lord be visibly their Maker, evidently their Father.

On Various Occasions.

Help us to live so that our lives will be worth while. May the dominion of the Spirit harness the senses. See our beginnings, and carry us on to perfection.

May every man serve his city with inconvenient devotion, and even though he see no result, may

he faithfully do what he can to prepare the way for the workers who will follow him.

We thank Thee for our daily bread. Let us not miss the food for our souls. May our souls be stronger than our bodies. May we feed daily on Jesus Christ, the living bread, and by him be strengthened to live his kind of a life.

Help us to reach out past the things we cannot understand, to the God we trust. We thank Thee for the passing of what changes, and the changelessness of that which passes not.

What we ask faithfully may we receive effectually. Help us to spell the words "Thou hast given us," in the common deeds of our common life. Comfort and heal those who have hurt themselves with their tools. Make our lives types of the divine life. Keep us from despondency; may despondency be over-powered of faith. Though the vision tarry, may we wait for it—He knows how to take care of the work we have done.

May we meet ordinary duty with extraordinary beauty—ordinary trial with extraordinary

fortitude—may ordinary tests be in our hands as clay which we break with superhuman power. We thank Thee for Thy great gift; may we go on some unusual errand for Thee. May what we receive to-day influence what we do to-morrow, and make some one yearn for Thy gift. Teach us the infinite significance of the opportunities of life, and infinite insignificance of the setting of life.

Spirit of Jesus, help me to enter by this door, by this new and living way, into the life of a child of God. Let me accept the eternal life as my Father's gift to me through Jesus Christ. Let me know its power and pleasures more and more abundantly. Help me to-day and every day to think of my life as belonging to Jesus, and to use it as he would have me,—for his glory and the good of those about me. Hear me for his sake, to whom I belong, whose service is perfect freedom. Amen.

May we not suffocate our souls in the world's atmosphere, but go up to the mountain-top, where the air is fresher and purer.

May all our work have a finer finish, and may we put into it a nobler and more exalted purpose, because it is done for Thee.

Thou hast encouraged every confidence by telling us to call Thee "Father."

Increase our intimacy so that we may tell Thee what we could tell to no other—yes, even what we could not express to our selves.

We have seen in Jesus, and in some Christians whom we know, the life we want to live. And yet we do not want to—we are hypocrites. O Spirit of Jesus, of power, of cleanliness, Thou madest fickle Peter a steadfast martyr. Thou canst do as much for us. Give us power to lay aside convenience for loving service—power to keep on with work, however monotonous. May the reserves of our unsurrendered lives be given up. Let us go into the next life, having learned how to be faithful.

We know Thou art infinite, yet Thou dost come close to us; Thou art eternal and unchangeable, yet Thou dost transform us into thine own image. We know Thee as a God of wisdom and power, but a God of tenderness, too. Thy justice we have seen, but Thou art very gentle to us, and dost show us thy goodness and truth. Thou hast given us thy Spirit, but in our own human bodies; therefore that Spirit must find expression through these bodies. We must be

feet and hands and channels of activity for the Life that lives within us. Forgive us for whatever we have done that has hurt Thee. We ask thy pardon in the name of Thy Son, our Brother.

Our hearts afflict us when we think of what we are, but our hearts leap for joy when we think of what Thou art. Make us wary before the approach of insinuating temptations. From this feast we hope to receive exhilaration of heart and exultation of spirit. Wherever we go, help us to remember that we are all in the Father's house, in different rooms of the mansion, it may be, but all in the Father's house,—and help us to be faithful to its noblest traditions, and its simplest duties. We thank Thee for the body of Christ upon earth. May it be more full of Thy Spirit. May the spur of Thy love push our feet into some new path of service for Thee, before we give out and break down, and pass away.

Fill us with Thy love that forgives, and summons, and empowers, and send us out into the world under this Thy summoning and challenging call. Help us to meet the next temptation in the expectation of victory;—to expect to be able to bring to the next trouble fortitude and

patience. This can be done. By the God-given power of will that is within us, may we create a new future out of the inspiration of this hour.

Thou canst give Thy love to all of us, and all Thy love to each of us. Help us not to feel left out and forgotten when we think of Thee. Help each one to say, "Thou canst easily remember me and know me by name, for in my particular place thou hast no one else to look after *but* me." May we say to Thee, "Take all I have—it may be much or little, according to the world's estimate, but it is all there is of *me*, and it is Thine."

Shall we dwell on our sorrows when we remember that Thou didst not spare Thine own Son, but deliveredst him up for us all? How can we but believe that Thou wilt do what is best for us? Thou wilt not withhold the best even if it hurt us to receive it. If we have borne adversity well, Thou wilt let us have the clear sunlight, if that be best for us; but Thou wilt not refuse to us the shadow, if we have been long in the sun, and now need shadow. If we are of high degree, we will rejoice in that we are exalted; if we are low, we will try to rejoice that we are cast down. We thank Thee that we have seen the light. If we see only the daybreak and no more, we are

glad—it is so beautiful! But if it go on to the perfect day, how can we speak of its glory? And the fullest life here is only the daybreak, the beginning of that perfect day Thou wilt yet reveal to us. Thou dost not expect perfection from us; Thou dost not look for the workman's finished powers, but only for a faithful apprenticeship—and that we have tried to give Thee.

Help me, O my God, to see the proof of thy love and the pattern of thy life in Jesus Christ. Help me to yield myself to the spirit of Jesus, that he may shed abroad thy love, and form thy life in me. Help me to make the things of life the tools of my spirit, and not its prizes; and to regard circumstances as only the scaffolding on which I stand while I build. May the tasks of my life be accepted as tests of my fidelity and accomplished for thy glory. Let me not regard temptations as solicitations to evil, or opportunities for self-indulgence, but as occasions for moral victory. Let troubles teach me sympathy and discipline make me a more intelligent disciple. Let human love make me more aware of the divine love. Let showers and sunbeams, summer and winter, day and night, send my grateful heart to Thee. May every opportunity for service or sacrifice be associated with Jesus, and be

accomplished by the aid of his Spirit, and may death be no more than the bell that sounds when school is over, and going home, may I find that I had laid up my treasure in the right place. In the name of my Redeemer and friend. Amen.

PASSAGES FROM LETTERS

PASSAGES FROM LETTERS

On the Death of a Child.

It will be hard for you not to ask why this must be.

God knows why, and that may be as good to us as though we knew a thousand reasons. I pray God to hold you quiet and patient and uncomplaining, and help you bear the weight of this seemingly unintelligible sorrow. I hope you will remember that this is the only world in which a Christian can suffer, and suffer patiently and meekly. We cannot suffer by and by. God helps us to glorify Him now, when we can.

On the Death of a Husband.

I wish I knew how to help you just now. Live all you can for others—looking out, not in. "O blest are they who learn to make the joys of others cure their own heart-ache"—if not *cure*, at least quiet for a little. Some day you will see, now bravely trust, lovingly live—and "quietly wait for the salvation of our Lord." May the One who promises, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be,"—keep that promise to your faith

and fortitude, and make your life, whatever its inward pain, an outward blessing.

On the Death of a Husband.

During these days of strain and suspense I have wished I could be a little help to you. I can *tell you* this at least, and pray that you may have, from God and your friends and your own heart, strength enough to *get through* a day at a time. I do not see what else you can do but just live, now. You cannot understand, or explain, but you know as well as I, that back of everything is God, and God is light,—we shall see. And God is love—we shall be satisfied. It may be a long while, but it will be worth waiting for. Trust Him all you can—you will be glad you did. I wish I could help you.

To One in Great Anxiety.

I have just heard of the new burden of sympathy and suffering the Father has laid on your heart.

More and more it comes to me, that as in the Father's home above there are many rooms, so in his school below there are many benches. No two of us are taught just alike. Just why you should be led as you have been and are being led

—just why you should have such hard lessons to learn, and so much tension on your heart strings, no one knows but God: *but He knows*—and that is worth everything to a child. "My Father knows, and I can wait for His explanation." "*Even so*, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

In the meantime, say over to yourself again and again, "seventy times seven" times a day, if need be, the blessed words of the sure promise, "My *Grace is sufficient* for thee." It has been—It is—It will be.

Written at Bethel, April, 1901, on Hearing of the Death of a Friend's Mother.

I heard yesterday that God had called your mother home to heaven. It will seem more than ever like Home to you now. Remember to think of your mother always as living, just away in another room of our Father's house. Jesus does not want us to say, "dead," for, as He said, "all *live* unto him," though they may seem dead to us.

We had the Lord's Supper together Thursday evening in an "upper room" in Jerusalem, and walked to Gethsemane. Good Friday we had prayers on Calvary by moonlight. Thank God for his love and our living hopes. God bless you all.

On Hearing of the Wounding of a Friend at the Battle of El Caney.

Your letter has stirred me deeply, for the strain under which you have all been and still are is a peculiarly hard and harrowing one. But that word harrow is not "harry;" it does not mean the tormenting of the field, but its preparation for larger, or better, or different yield. The will of God is best always, and hurts so much less when we go with it. What God means, we cannot always see, but if we wait trustingly, He will show us, and we shall be satisfied.

To One in Great Distress.

Push happiness out of your life as an intention or expectation, and settle down as simply and earnestly as you can to usefulness; then God will send you what further happiness He sees best. You are building character fast nowadays, laying deep foundations of patience, courage, and bravery; building much under gloomy skies, where no sun and stars appear for many days. But remember God knows all about you, and will some day satisfy you. God bless you by making you a blessing.

To a Young Woman in Special Temptation and Need.

It seems a long time since I saw you. How are you getting on, and where are you? I wish some time you would come to see me.

Has it been just as hard, up-hill fighting as it was before? Whether or no, we come sooner or later to find out that life is a good deal of a battle—with temptation inside and out, with cowardice and pride and weakness and everything bad. *But that is why we are here*—to learn to *fight a good fight* and keep the faith. God is so good and patient with us, that He helps us to fight on and fight better, no matter how many times we have been whipped. You know the Chinese government cuts off the head of a general if he is defeated—and so they never have any good generals. *Men learn from failure*, and if we never make mistakes, *we never make anything.* "Neither do I condemn thee," says Jesus, our Saviour. "Go and do better, I will help you. I will *never* leave you nor forsake you."

This life is only a *little beginning* anyway. We are just learning to walk and talk and work. We must keep on trying. We must get up when we tumble down, and take our bumps to our Heavenly Father, from whom all mothers get their love. Just as mothers kiss black and blue spots, and

dry tears, and hug us, and send us away to be more careful, so God does. Tell Him everything. Don't ever give up, or lose heart or hope. "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" Please think of me as a real friend.

To the Same.

You did just right to send me word about yourself again. I want you to think of me as your friend, and treat me as a friend—that means, let me know once in a while how things go with you. Do not bother yourself too much with longings for happiness and friendship and the "maybe's." Take stout hold of the joy and glory of being a *little useful* to *some one—some way.* Usefulness is splendid. If you can help anybody even a little, be glad. Up the steps of usefulness and kindness, God will lead you to friendship and happiness. If you wish and dream, and regret and wonder, you will degenerate and be discouraged; if you can add any joy, strength, comfort, rest, pleasure, to lives about you, your own life will be refreshed, will be more interesting, and better worth the living. Turn your back on the past, for God forgives everything, and turn your face to a useful future in which God recognizes anything done in kindness, even the giving of a drink of water. Look bright

to everyone, speak gently and cheerfully, hum little tunes to yourself (and to the Lord) when you are working. Plan surprises for people. Jesus "*went about doing good.*" So can you in your way, with his spirit. If you fill well the place where you are now, be sure he will give you another place, growing larger as you grow larger. Whenever you feel blue, remember God loves you, and think up some kindness—if no more than sending a flower to some one or writing a note to Henry Street, or Mulberry Street, or to me.

To the Same.

I hope you will not hesitate, when these books are read, to come to me again, for books standing idle are talents in a napkin. I am glad you are fighting so brave a fight. Never lower your ideals a particle, but every day do your very best, and you will build up a useful life, which is the best any one can do at this stage of our existence. And to your usefulness, God will now add as much happiness as is good for you.

To a Friend on the Christian's Hope.

I know no reason why we should limit our Christian hopes; for the God who satisfieth the desire of every living thing—an Old Testament

promise—cannot, having revealed his love in Jesus Christ, withhold from us any good thing.

To a Friend on the Communion of Saints.

I agree with you that the communion with the invisible saints must be more of a dream than a reality. But we have a right to dream dreams, if they are not contradicted by the evident laws of God's word, or God's world.

To One Who Was Greatly Discouraged.

Pay as little attention to discouragements as possible. Plough ahead as a steamer does, rough or smooth—rain or shine. To carry your cargo and make your port is the point.

To a Harvard Freshman.

I send you a small package in the interest of financial accuracy. I hope you will plug up that cavity in your person. Your aunts seem anxious that you should develop into a punctilious book-keeper. Keep this in your side-pocket as a daily scratch-book for memoranda of engagements as well as expenses. At night, or every day or two, enter them up. The habit of impersonating Captain Cuttle and "making a note on't" will

save you many a broken engagement, if not a broken head ; and, even if you are "dead broke" in the end, you will know where you stand.

Written to a Friend Over Seventy Years of Age, Who Was in His Last Illness.

I have thought of you more than once lately, and wondered how things were going. It is a comfort to look back through the years and think what good friends we have been, and then to make a jump into the future and know that there the real summer season of friendship comes. The best things we have known on earth can be but small beginnings, little eyes and buds on the tree of life that look on to the real unfolding of all that life and love can mean. I have no doubt that life is rather a wearisome thing for you nowadays, but comfort yourself by knowing that you are a man of great pluck and patience and will fight the fight bravely, and keep the faith loyally.

With changeless affection—

To the Same Friend a Month Later.

I hope that the fight is not too hard, and that the good Father gives to you, his son, daily strength for daily needs. It is no joke for a man so accustomed to good, honest, out-door

dirt, and birds and beasts and everything fresh and breezy to be shut up in the house like a bird in a cage. But it is part of the schooling, and until the bell rings, *we must be good children.*

To the Same Friend Two Months Later, in May.

I know just how the old place looks, with everything in full bloom, and wish I could hear the orioles and the wrens and even the chattering of the black-birds. It is a comfort to think that the spring-time comes because of the Living God, and that, past our summer sunshine and autumn's ripening and winter's decay and bareness and outward death, there lies the immortal hope of the soul's spring-time. "Because I live ye shall live also."

I hope you are fairly comfortable, though I hardly dare to, for it is no joke letting go of our tools as they wear out. But you are God's workman, and some fine day He will give you a new kit and set you at tasks in which and of which you will never weary. I love to think of our unchanged friendship and that, though we may not be cronies on the back piazza, or in the garden much more, if any more in this world, we shall be in paradise, which, after all, is God's garden, with no serpent.

On the Death of a Child.

My heart goes out to you—twice over—for the sorrow that has come to you, and for the thought that I could perhaps be a help to you. That shows that you see already one reason why sorrow comes—you turn to me, because I have tasted the same cup. Some day someone will come to you, and you will "comfort with the comfort wherewith you yourself have been comforted." Perfect sympathy cannot spring from the imagination. Only they who have suffered can really sympathize. I am sure you are saying, like the little child in the dark, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." The worst of all losses is a lost sorrow, for then all is lost. Your little child is safe, and I believe your sorrow is safe, too, for you are your Father's child, and you want to please Him. I would not ask "why" if I were you. "How" is a better word—how can I glorify Thee, how well can I show those who know me how the Father can help His child. God's will is not to be *borne*, but ever to be done. Now you are to *do* His will under new, hard, distressing and depressing circumstances. If we were pagans, we might hide ourselves and our despair, but we are Christians who say "Our Father" and hear our Saviour's words, "Because I live ye shall live also." Heirs then of eternal

life and love—our own, ours forever, sleeping or waking—here or there—with uplifted faces, brave hearts and faithful hands, we must do our work, help lift others' burdens, scatter kindnesses, following him who said, knowing it would lead to the Cross, "Follow me." I did not mean to write all this. I only meant to tell you how sorry I am for you. Enter the door of a brave and patient trust. "Blessed are they *who have not seen*, and *yet* have believed." This is the only world in which you can suffer, so do it perfectly, trustingly, *unselfishly*, seeking through your grief to be better fitted to serve in Christ's name and way those who need. Always think of me as your friend, and take any advantage of my friendship. What are we for, but to love and help one another?

On the Death of a Father.

Not a day has passed, since God called your father from the home here to the home there, that I have not thought of you and prayed for you. I thought I would wait a little while before writing—it takes quite a while to get one's breath and be able to think straight.

I have no comfort to give you. God has given you all possible comfort. All I can do is to try to help you to take it. I know you do. God

has been at great pains to tell you—to prove to you—that He loves you. "He that spared not His own son," but gave him freely for you, has done that which, if fully understood, if fully appreciated, would make a doubt of His goodness, of His kindness impossible. Pillow your head, rest your heart in the thought—true now—true for ever and for ever—God loves you. "I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me." Some day you will see what this thought of you that has found expression in this sorrow means, and that it was another proof of God's love. Glorify God, and get His peace by believing it, though you cannot see it. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet *have* believed." Trust God now in the dark, when it means something. It will be so easy to see it all, and to be thankful, when the perfect day dawns.

Perhaps the richest of God's earthly gifts is an accepted sorrow. Do not lose this one. Accept it. Say "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," and He will tell you some things worth all it cost to hear them. I cannot say what—but you will know. You will be more heavenly minded—more patient—more kind and gentle—more consecrated to the good you can do. I am sure of this much; for these are some of "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" that come afterwards, in those whom God loves and chastens.

POEMS

POEMS

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread."

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat, and the shower,
And the sun, and the Father's will.

O That I May Grow.

O that I may grow!
I see the leaves out-pushing hour by hour,
With steady joy the buds burst out aflower
Urged gladly on by Nature's waking power.
O that I may grow.

O that I may grow!
What though Time cuts his furrows in my face,
My heart may ever add grace unto grace,
Graces with added days still keeping pace.
O that I may grow.

In the Furrow.

The dark brown mould's upturned
By the sharp-pointed plow,
And I've a lesson learned.

My life is but a field
  Stretched out beneath God's sky,
Some harvest rich to yield.

Where grows the golden grain,
  Where faith, — where sympathy?
In a furrow cut by pain.

Be Strong.

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil,—Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long.
Faint not, fight on! To-morrow comes the song.

The All in All.

What light of earth but springeth from the sun?
  What human love but from the Father's heart?
Then let my thanks be given to God, the One
  Above, and you below, to each a part.

You are not robbed, and doubly rich am I;
For love of God, through you, I love you more.
Nor is God robbed by thanks to you, and why?
For your dear sake I newly Him adore.

Love and Loyalty.

Thou hast not asked me, Lord,
To first of all love Thee,
But simply to believe the word
That tells Thy love to me.

Thou dost not bid me feel
An ardent love for Thee,
And fear affection is not real
That does not burn in me.

But Thou hast said, "My friend
Is he who keeps My word."
This I can do even to the end;
I can be faithful, Lord.

Then will the loyal heart
Find its reward above;
For when I see Thee as Thou art
I cannot help but love.

In Many Parts.

God of the Dew,
  In gentlest ministry,
  As silently
Would I some soul refresh anew.

God of the Sun,
  Far flaming heat and light,
  Be my delight
On radiant errands swift to run.

God of the Star,
  To its stern orbit true,
  My soul imbue
With dread, lest I Thine order mar.

God of the Sea,
  Majestic, vast, profound,
  Enlarge my bound,—
Broader and deeper let me be.

Not to Be Ministered To.

O Lord, I pray
  That for this day
I may not swerve
  By foot or hand
  From Thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.

This, too, I pray,
That for this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent,
Not to be pleased, but to please.

And if I may,
I'd have this day
Strength from above
To set my heart
In heavenly art,
Not to be loved, but to love.

Rest.

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
Commit to Him thy way.
What to thy sight seems dark as night,
To Him is bright as day.

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
He planned for thee thy life,
Brings fruit from rain, brings good from pain,
And peace and joy from strife.

Rest in the Lord, my soul;
This fretting weakens thee.
Why not be still? Accept His will;
Thou shalt His glory see.

I Am Thine.

A fragrance of a flower
That fills unseen the air,
As at the twilight hour
There stealeth unaware
The sound of music sweet
And gently in accord;
So when my lips repeat
Thy name, O Christ, my Lord,
There warms a sudden glow
Within this heart of mine—
A joy, as well, I know,
That tells me I am Thine.

Sonnet.

The sun had hardly risen on my sight
And given me fairest promise for the day,
Ere clouds began to drive my hopes away,
And bring back to the air the chill of night.
"Ah, me," I cried, "my day that dawned so bright,
Why must it thus be clouded in an hour;
Why, ere the bud had time to burst aflower,
Must it be checked, and never see the light?"
And then an answer came. It was the sight
Of One who, tho' He suffered, doubted not;
Who, tho' a Man of Sorrows, ne'er forgot

His Father's will, but made it his delight,
And perfected thro' suffering, looked at me,
Saying, "My child, wouldst thou not perfect be?"

Companionship.

No distant Lord have I,
Loving afar to be;
Made flesh for me, He cannot rest
Until He rests in me.

Brother in joy and pain,
Bone of my bone was He,
Now,—intimacy closer still,
He dwells Himself in me.

I need not journey far
This dearest friend to see,
Companionship is always mine,
He makes His home with me.

I envy not the twelve,
Nearer to me is He;
The life He once lived here on earth
He lives again in me.

Ascended now to God,
My witness there to be,
His witness here am I, because
His spirit dwells in me.

O Glorious Son of God,
Incarnate Deity,
I shall forever be with Thee
Because Thou art with me.

Worship.

When the great sun sinks to his rest,
His golden glories thrilling me,
And voiceless longings stir my breast,
Then teach me, Lord, to worship Thee.

And when the stars—the daylight fled—
In serried, shining ranks, I see,
Filling the splendid vault o'erhead,
Then teach me, Lord, to worship Thee.

If roaming by the ocean's shore,
The murmuring waves sing low to me,
Or thundering billows hoarsely roar,
Then teach me, Lord, to worship Thee.

Or if in solemn forest shades,
The calm of nature steals o'er me,
And silence all my soul pervades,
Then teach me, Lord, to worship Thee.

Not in the sacred shrines alone,
Which chime their summons unto me,
Would I look to Thy heavenly throne,
But *everywhere* would worship Thee.

Sailing Westward.

(Written on the *Germanic*, September, 1898.)

How stoutly and grimly our iron prow
Pushes its way to the West,
Like the sharp, steel point of a shining plow
That cleaves the green field's breast.

How glorious the sun in the sky to-day;
Why rush with such haste along,
And lose the bright hours as we speed away,
And the gleam of the waves, and their song?

But the heart of the ship still throbs away,
It never dreams of rest;
How joyous, how winsome soe'er the day,
On, steadily on, to the West!

Now thunders the gale in its awful might,
'Tis madness to face such a sea.
Why brave such risks in a hopeless fight?
About ship! And off for the lea!

But the good ship will not flinch from her foe,
She has set herself for the fray.
Her orders are Westward, come weal, come woe,
And she cannot but obey.

Then onward through sunshine, and storm and night,
No tarrying here, my soul;
Thou must, if thou read thy chart aright,
Push steadily on to thy goal.

Let pleasures delight thee, but not detain,
Let courage in storms rise higher,
And thy Pilot will bring thee thro' joy and pain
To the haven of thy desire.

The Moon.

I watched a boy who looked with wondering eyes
At the young Moon clear in the Western skies,
Shining with slender crescent, silver bright,
Upon the spellbound child's enraptured sight.

"What is it that you see, my child?" said I.
"The Moon so beautiful," was his reply.
"But tell me what the Moon is. Do you know?"
"It's *beautiful!*" he said,—his face aglow.

. . . . . .

I turned away and thought, "Do I know more?
What is the Moon? A dead world, cold to the core.
What else? A planet circling 'round the earth.
What else? Why nothing else of any worth

"Except *that it is beautiful!* Ah, me.
What wish I more, so long as I can see
With kindling eye its beauty, and can feel
Its endless charm through all my being steal?

. . . . . .

"Oh, God, I pray Thee for the childlike heart
That can enjoy—all vexing thoughts apart—
The beauties Thou in Heaven and Earth dost show,
Nor fret myself with things I do not know."

The Love of God.

God's boundless Love and arching sky
Above us when we wake or sleep,
Above us when we smile or weep,
Above us when we live or die.

God's tireless Love! Beside the cot
Of her sick child the mother sleeps.
The Heavenly Father ever keeps
Unweary watch—He slumbers not.

God's patient Love! Misunderstood
By hearts that suffer in the night.
Doubted—yet waiting till Heaven's light
Shall show how all things work for good.

God's mighty Love! On Calvary's height,
Suffering to save us from our sin,
To bring the Heavenly Kingdom in,
And fill our lives with joy and light.

God's changeless Love! The wandering one
Forsakes, forgets, dishonors; yet,
Repenting, going home, is met
With no reproach—"Welcome, my son!"

God's endless Love! What will it be
When earthly shadows flee away,
For all Eternity's bright day
The unfolding of that Love to see!

The First Day of Spring.

My heart in tumult, thro' the woods I fare,
The chill of Winter lingering in the air,
The dead leaves rustling on the trees o'erhead,
And dead leaves crackling underneath my tread.
The harsh, discordant rooks incessant call,
The wood dove moans, and sighing thro' it all,
The wind that seems to make more sad each sound
Soothes not, but aggravates my grief profound.

O memory, what pangs thou bringest me,
As I recall the joys that used to be,

My summertime when brightest dreams came
true,
When hopes fulfilled taught me to hope anew.
But now—the flowers have faded, birds have
fled,
My tears have spent themselves, and hope is
dead.
O cruel Winter, naught survives thy blight,
Naught but my graves, my grieving and the
night.

. . . . . .

What fragrance of the softening earth is this?
'Tis Nature, waking 'neath the sun's warm kiss,
And here's a blade of grass, fresh-sprung and
green,
And there's a budding twig—the first I've seen.
My heart, look up! The blessed Spring is
near—
The Spring, the Resurrection of the year.
Is near? Is here—for there's a bluebird's note
Purling and gurgling from his tawny throat.

Thank God for the return of this sweet Spring,
For the new life that throbs in everything.
It tells me that the Winter meant not death,
'Twas Nature resting—Nature taking breath.
My sorrow chilled me like the snow and frost,
I doubted God, but now my doubts are lost.

After the storm and chill and waiting long,
Shall come the time of birds and flowers and song.

My Father's World.

This is my Father's world.
On the day of its wondrous birth
The stars of light in phalanx bright
Sang out in Heavenly mirth.

This is my Father's world.
E'en yet to my listening ears
All nature sings, and around me rings
The music of the spheres.

This is my Father's world.
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world.
The birds that their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.

This is my Father's world.
He shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world.
From His eternal throne,
He watch doth keep when I'm asleep,
And I am not alone.

This is my Father's world.
Dreaming, I see His face.
I ope my eyes, and in glad surprise
Cry, "The Lord is in this place."

This is my Father's world.
I walk a desert lone.
In a bush ablaze to my wondering gaze
God makes His glory known.

This is my Father's world.
Among the mountains drear,
'Mid rending rocks and earthquake shocks,
The still, small voice I hear.

This is my Father's world.
From the shining courts above,
The Beloved One, His only Son,
Came—a pledge of deathless love.

This is my Father's world.
Now closer to Heaven bound,
For dear to God is the earth Christ trod,
No place but is holy ground.

This is my Father's world.
  His love has filled my breast,
I am reconciled, I am His child,
  My soul has found His rest.

This is my Father's world.
  A wanderer I may roam,
Whate'er my lot, it matters not,
  My heart is still at home.

This is my Father's world.
  O let me ne'er forget
That tho' the wrong seems oft so strong,
  God is the ruler yet.

This is my Father's world.
  The battle is not done.
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
  And earth and Heaven be one.

This is my Father's world.
  Should my heart be ever sad?
The Lord is King—let the Heavens ring
  God reigns—let the earth be glad.

Surprise.

O little bulb, uncouth,
  Ragged and rusty brown,
Have you some dew of youth?
  Have you a crimson gown?

Plant me and see
What I shall be,—
God's fine surprise
Before your eyes!

O fuzzy ugliness,
Poor, helpless, crawling worm,
Can any loveliness
Be in that sluggish form?
Hide me and see
What I shall be,—
God's bright surprise
Before your eyes!

A body wearing out,
A crumbling house of clay!
O agony of doubt
And darkness and dismay!
Trust God and see
What I shall be,—
His best surprise
Before your eyes!

Thine.

Whose eye foresaw this way?
Not mine.
Whose hand marked out this day?
Not mine.

A clearer eye than mine,
'Twas Thine.
A wiser hand than mine,
'Twas Thine!

Then let my hand be still
In Thine,
And let me find my will
In Thine!

A Song.

A gloomy day in early March—a day
Of chilling gusts and whirls of snow, a day
That makes the longed-for Spring seem far away.

But sweetest melody, O sudden cheer!
The first song-sparrow's note rings on my ear,
And Winter's clean forgot, and Spring is here!

Clear Skies.

A fallen leaf on a flowing stream, and on the water a moment's gleam
Of sunshine,—and the chilling gray o'erspreads more coldly the Autumn day.
And once this had brought a pang to me, a sense of pain in my heart to see
The leafless trees and the stubble sear, and the darkening face of the dying year.

It is not so now. My heart is glad, tho' every sight and sound is sad,
For I have come to realize that joy depends not on the skies.
The path of my duty holds along thro' Winter's storm, and Springtime's song,
And cloudy the day or stormy the night, the sky of my heart is always bright.

Memories.

Past the city's whirl and heat,
In a garden walking,
Walking 'mid the flowers sweet,
With the flowers talking.

Felt I Nature's gentle hand
In the breeze caressing,
Felt me in a happy land,
Felt me full of blessing.

Yet a pang was in my joy—
In my joy a sadness,
Something of the careless boy
Missed I from my gladness.

Till the fragrance of a rose
Blew from out the years,
How can Heaven so swift disclose
Thro' a rush of tears!

A Winter Day.

'Tis Fairyland this winter day,
The sunlight flashes back a ray
Of glory from each ice-clad spray.

It had been sleeting all the night,
But now with flash of morning light
The earth is sparkling silver bright.

The sun shines warm. It cannot last;
The transient gleam will soon be past,
But not the spell upon me cast.

The vision dawns on me again
Of brightness sprung from frost and rain,
Of beauty born of grief and pain—

A beauty brief,—but true the while,
O, troubled one, you shall beguile
Some midnight gloom, if you will smile.

Autumn Hopes.

Blaze out in red, and glow, ye dying leaves,
And flaunt your flag before his eyes who grieves,
Stir the slow pulse of him who dreads the Fall,
And warm the heart that fears a snowy pall.

No bitter wind, no cloud enshrouding wraith,
Nor frost, nor storms, can daunt your cheerful faith.
Your flaming signals spring from hidden roots
That through the Winter nurse their Springtide shoots.

The Trees in Winter.

'Mid the Summer's countless beauties
Lurketh many a hidden one,
As we cannot see the stars shine
For the splendor of the sun.

So, the exuberance of foliage
Blinds us to the wondrous charms
Of the trees, till Winter strips them—
Gives the sight of their bare arms.

Now behold the Master's drawing
Clear against the cold, gray sky;
Not a trace of warmth or color,
But fine feasting for the eye.

For we see the vertebration,
All the lines of radiation,
All the graceful interlacing
Of the frost-like, fairy tracing.

. . . . . .

Have thy Summer leaves been smitten,
Beaten off in storm and strife?
Stand up bravely! Show in Winter,
Strength, grace, symmetry of life.

To the Dogwood.

How fresh, and pure, and beautiful thou art,
Thou blossoming Dogwood. When the air of Spring
Seems palpitating with the Summer's warmth,
Too early come, thou stretchest forth thine arms
To cool the air with flowers white as snow—
Arms bending low, as though with weight of snow.

Now Autumn's here, but still thou cheerest me
With thy red glory, warming all the air
Achill with frost,—as though the Summer's glow
And splendors of the sunset thou hadst drunk,
To blush and flush along thy leafy veins,
And fire my heart to brave the Winter's storm.

School Days.

Lord, let me make this rule,
To think of life as school,
And try my best
To stand each test,
And do my work,
And nothing shirk.

Should someone else outshine
This dullard head of mine,
Should I be sad?
I will be glad.
To do my best
Is Thy behest.

If weary with my book
I cast a wistful look
Where posies grow,
O let me know
That flowers within
Are best to win.

Dost take my book away
Anon to let me play,
And let me out
To run about?
I grateful bless
Thee for recess.

Then recess past, alack,
I turn me slowly back,
On my hard bench,
My hands to clench,
And set my heart
To learn my part.

These lessons Thou dost give
To teach me how to live,
To do, to bear,
To get and share,
To work and play,
And trust alway.

What though I may not ask
To choose my daily task?
Thou hast decreed
To meet my need.
What pleases Thee,
That shall please me.

Some day the bell will sound,
Some day my heart will bound,
As with a shout
That school is out
And lessons done,
I homeward run.

Emancipation.

Why be afraid of Death as though your life were
breath!
Death but anoints your eyes with clay. O glad
surprise!

Why should you be forlorn? Death only husks
the corn.
Why should you fear to meet the thresher of the
wheat?

Is sleep a thing to dread? Yet sleeping, you are
dead
Till you awake and rise, here, or beyond the
skies.

Why should it be a wrench to leave your wooden
bench,
Why not with happy shout run home when school
is out?

The dear ones left behind! O foolish one and
blind.
A day—and you will meet,—a night—and you
will greet!

This is the death of Death, to breathe away a
breath
And know the end of strife, and taste the death-
less life.

And joy without a fear, and smile without a tear,
And work, nor care, nor rest, and find the last the best.

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